

SECONDARY EDUCATION POLICY
AND ADMINISTRATION IN
MIDDLESEX SINCE 1944.

Renate Saran



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Abstract

The 1944 Education Act left open how the secondary schools system was to be organised. This study traces the functioning of the system in the second largest local education authority in the country over a period of twenty years. The effects on administration resulting from changes in political control are documented. Certain policy decisions are described in considerable detail in order to analyse the variety of roles played by administrators at local and central government level, by elected representatives, by teachers and by parents.

The thesis is organised into three main parts.

First the general background is outlined, covering the relevant issues that arose during the war-time debate on education, the 1944 Education Act and national secondary schools policy since that Act, and the local government structure established after 1944 for the provision and administration of the education service in Middlesex.

The second part reviews policy-making and administration within the framework of a selective schools system. Here the formulation of the early post-war development plans and the establishment of comprehensive schools are discussed. A detailed account is given of the administrative and political complexities arising from selection at the age of eleven.

The third part deals with fee-paying day grammar schools to which a minority of pupils were sent at public expense. This section assesses the nature of the inter-dependency between the private and state sectors of education, and shows the extent to which this affected local education authority decisions at various levels.

It is concluded that the impetus for change in the secondary schools system does not come from any single group in society, and that changes in administrative practice are closely related to changes in public opinion. Indeed, these two factors reinforce each other.

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Notes

1. Pseudonyms for Individuals Interviewed and referred to in Thesis:

<u>Conservative Councillors:</u>	Councillor Fox
	Cr. Mrs. Deer
	Councillor Stag
	Councillor Hare*
<u>Labour Councillors</u>	Cr. Mrs. Beech
	Councillor Oak
	Councillor Holly
	Councillor Maple

(*correspondence only)

Officers

Former Chief Education Officer	Mr. Salmon
Former Deputy Education Officer	Miss Trout
Divisional Education Officer	Mr. Whale
Divisional Education Officer	Mr. Pike

Teacher Representatives

NUT Divisional Secretary	
Primary Head Teacher	Mr. Dove
Primary Head Teacher	Mrs. Crane
Primary Head Teacher	Mr. Sparrow
Grammar School Teacher	Mr. Finch

2. Individual Schools referred to in Thesis:

a) County Schools which have been given fictitious names

Secondary Modern School	Milton School
Secondary Modern School	Byron School
Secondary Modern School	Shelley School
Secondary Grammar School	Keats School
Secondary Modern School	Blake School**
Secondary Comprehensive School	Eliot School**

(**these two buildings became the
Eliot Comprehensive School)

b) Schools referred to by a letter of the alphabet

Voluntary Aided School	School A
Independent School	School B
Direct Grant School	School C
Independent School	School D
Direct Grant School	School E
Direct Grant School	School F
Independent School	School G
Direct Grant School	School H
Direct Grant School	School I
Direct Grant School	School J

3. Abbreviations used in Thesis:

CC	County Council
CEO	Chief Education Officer
Cr.	Councillor
DES	Department of Education and Science
Joint Four	Joint Committee of the Four Secondary Associations (Association of Head Masters, Association of Head Mistresses, Assistant Masters Association, Association of Assistant Mistresses).
LCC	London County Council
LEA	Local Education Authority
MCC	Middlesex County Council
MCTA	Middlesex County Teachers Association
MEC	Middlesex Education Committee
NUT	National Union of Teachers
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RC	Roman Catholic

P r e f a c e

This study of secondary education policy and administration in Middlesex is divided into three main parts. Part I gives the general background; Part II portrays the local education authority's selective secondary schools' system, how it worked and how non-selective schools were started within it; Part III deals with some of the fee-paying day grammar schools, and illustrates the relationship of inter-dependence between the state and private school sectors. The evidence presented shows that this inter-dependence had major administrative and policy consequences for the maintained secondary schools' sector.

In analysing the policy implications for the maintained schools of LEA placements in fee-paying day schools, this study breaks new ground. Much work on the inter-dependence between the state and private school sectors has concentrated primarily on the independent boarding schools. Furthermore, this is believed to be the first comprehensive study of the policy-making process within a local education authority covering a period of twenty years.

The existing educational structure of a large urbanised local education authority area was studied in order to discover how decisions were made to introduce changes in policy and administrative practice. It is the political and administrative processes which have been examined, not the educational ones. Thus decisions about the position of secondary schools within the educational system of the area have been studied but not their internal organisation or curricula. Attempts to start comprehensive schools within a selective schools' structure form part of the study, but not the assessment of their success or otherwise in educational or social terms. This latter task has been tackled by other workers. Psychologists and educationists have attempted to evaluate whether individual comprehensive schools achieve what is claimed for them by their champions.

The approach of educational sociologists is also a different one. In the last fifteen years, their work has shown the tremendous importance

of social background for a child's educational attainment. Sociologists have analysed the significance of family aspiration, living conditions and of the school's formal and informal pattern of organisation in relation to school performance. The growing body of evidence about the social handicaps of many children has contributed to the favourable climate of opinion for acceptance of proposals such as the creation of educational priority areas¹ to which special help should be given.

Whatever remedies are proposed to the problems thrown up by educational sociology, their application would be a task for central and local government administrators. It is they who provide the framework within which teachers and other professional workers operate.

The present study attempts to contribute to an understanding of the difficulties and possibilities encountered in changing the school system².

* * *

The study was made possible by the cooperation and generous help of a great many people. I would like to thank all of them most warmly. Many of those who showed interest, gave encouragement and answered innumerable questions have to be thanked anonymously in order to protect the confidential character of a near-contemporary study.

Shortly after the study commenced, Mrs. Marjorie McIntosh, my first supervisor at Bedford College, died quite suddenly, and Professor O.R. McGregor kindly agreed to take her place. I would like to thank him for providing the initial stimulus and guidance, and for periodic critical challenges at crucial stages of the work. The staff at Bedford College Library and at the Department of Education and Science Reference Library proved helpful throughout, and in the early stages Miss P.M. Downie, former Chief Librarian at the latter, gave personal guidance on sources.

But without the cooperation of the former Chief Education Officer in Middlesex, Dr. C.E. Gurr, his Deputy, Miss A.M. Hargreaves, and the

-
1. As proposed by the recent Plowden Report, Children in Primary Schools, HMSO, 1967.
 2. The methods used in this study are indicated in Appendix A.

former Middlesex County Archivist, Miss E.D. Mercer (now Head Archivist, Greater London Record Office), the study would not have been possible. Through their good offices, the essential local authority sources were put at my disposal. To them and to Miss Mercer's staff at the Middlesex County Record Office (now part of the Greater London Record Office) I owe a special debt of gratitude. I am also indebted to certain Education Officers in some parts of the former County of Middlesex who permitted perusal of local records for detailed case studies.

As a supplementary source for educational policy-making in Middlesex, it was of great value to study the minutes of the Middlesex County Teachers Association (National Union of Teachers) and those of the Middlesex County Council Labour Group, and thanks are due to the former officers of these organisations for permission to peruse these records¹.

Beyond this it was a constant source of encouragement and amazement to me that former and present members of Parliament, councillors, teacher representatives, education officers and others should have spared so much time to answer my questions during interviews or by correspondence. The invaluable help is here acknowledged of the thirty people who were interviewed and the three who were kind enough to answer enquiries by correspondence. Those to whom frequent reference is made in the thesis have been given pseudonyms and their function in policy-making has been stated in the Notes preceding this preface. Many of them are extremely busy people; not one who was approached refused to see me. Some spared several hours, if necessary on more than one occasion. Some were kind enough to lend me relevant personal papers and documents.

I have done my best not to abuse in any way the trust placed in me by giving me access to confidential sources. My purpose has been to understand and explain the political and administrative processes and the role played in these by particular individuals in their capacity as officer, councillor or teacher.

1. Now in the care of the Greater London Record Office (Middlesex Records) and of the London Labour Party respectively.

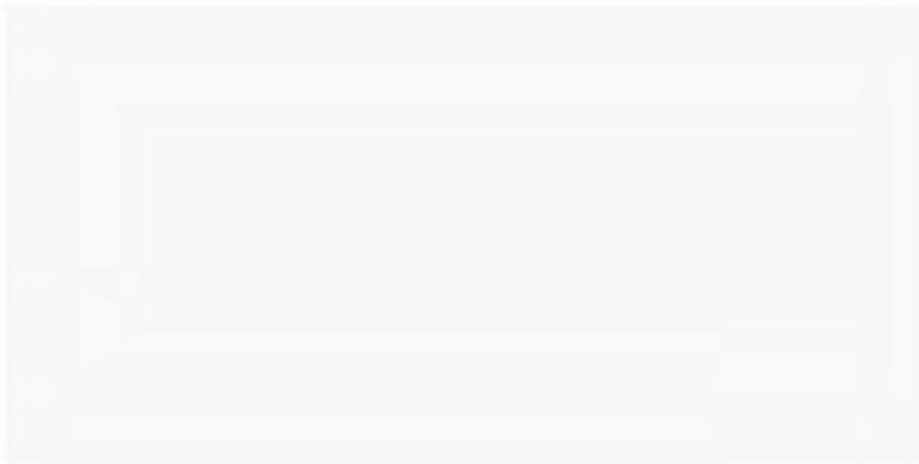
Finally, particular thanks are due to Mrs. Bernice Martin of Bedford College, who undertook the detailed supervision of the writing of the thesis. She has shared all my problems as well as the excitement of undertaking and bringing to a successful conclusion this study.

Renate Saran.
Bedford College.
December, 1967.



PART I

INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND



Chapter 1The War-Time Debate on Education

(i)

"Before 1944 our policy was secondary education for the fortunate few; since 1944 it has been secondary education for all - as radical and revolutionary a change as our educational system is ever likely to experience."¹

Some new legislation is a landmark. The 1944 Education Act certainly was. It laid the legislative framework for the provision of secondary education for all. But the test of any Act lies in its implementation. Heavy new responsibilities were placed on the Local Education Authorities. Many important details were left open and had subsequently to be settled by the policies and administration of LEAs. In the implementation of the Act, LEAs cooperated with the Ministry of Education nationally on the one hand and with teachers, the churches and other interested parties locally on the other.

Particularly in the early post-war years, policy decisions in the secondary schools field at local level were strongly influenced by the problems and opinions brought to light during the war-time debate on educational reform. This study deals with the policy of one LEA for the maintained schools sector on the one hand and the fee-paying schools sector on the other. Thus certain relevant issues have been selected from the war-time debate as an introduction to this subject matter. But first the Act is considered briefly in its significance as a measure of post-war reconstruction.

1. W.O. Lester Smith, Education, Pelican, 1957, Revised 1962, p.104.

(ii)

The Education Act was the first measure of reconstruction initiated during the second world war. It reached the statute book even before hostilities ended. During the war, Britain depended on the efforts of all its citizens and the Government therefore had to concern itself with the morale of civilians and soldiers alike.

After the first world war the promise of a "land fit for heroes" had not been honoured. This time it must be different. Millions of people had to be convinced that the post-war world would be a better world. War strategy required that the call for social justice, for the abolition of privilege, for a more equitable distribution of income and wealth, for drastic changes in the country's social and economic life be heeded¹.

The introduction of the Education Bill in the House of Commons on 15th December 1943 was one way in which this call was heeded. A Ministry of Reconstruction had been created the previous month. It was remarkable that a country engaged in total war should have found time to prepare the peace. The introduction of the Education Bill had been preceded by lengthy negotiations between the President of the Board of Education and the interested parties on the basis of confidential proposals prepared by civil servants and circulated as early as 1941 to the Executives of twenty-eight professional and other bodies as the Green Book². During 1942 and 1943 many organisations had published their views on educational reform³. The Government in 1943 had issued a White Paper on Educational

-
1. R.M. Titmuss, Essays on the Welfare State, Allen & Unwin, 1958. Essay on "War and Social Policy", p.82.
 2. Hansard, Commons, 373, 31.7.41. Col. 1564.
In reply to a Question by Mr. Wilson, the list of 28 organisations was given to which the Green Book had been circulated. The title of this confidential "Green Book" was Education after the War. See Marjorie A. Travis: Dual System Reform 1941-44. M.A.Thesis, London University, 1950.
 3. H.C. Dent, Education in Transition, Kegan Paul, 1944, p.109. Dent estimated that some 100 memoranda were presented. The names of approximately 40 organisations are listed in his book, including various teacher associations, Local Authority associations, the political parties, the Trade Union Congress, etc.

Reconstruction,¹ which was debated in Parliament in July². Many hours of Parliamentary time on many days were given to the Bill in both Houses between December 1943 and July 1944. On August 3rd, 1944, the Bill received the Royal Assent.

The third reading debate on the Education Bill was a congratulatory affair. R.A. Butler (now Lord Butler) as President of the Board of Education, a Conservative, and the late J. Chuter Ede, his Parliamentary Secretary, a Labour Member, were complimented on having piloted a great Bill through the House. More than one Member implied that such a Bill could not have been successful except under a Coalition Government.³

Previous educational reform in the nineteenth and twentieth century had been accompanied by religious dispute; it had been feared that religious strife might kill this Bill. When Butler urged the Prime Minister in the autumn of 1941 that the educational system needed adapting to modern requirements, Churchill had replied cautiously. He remembered the strife surrounding the Education Bill of 1902 and feared that the religious issue would raise party politics in "a most acute and dangerous form"⁴, something he dared not countenance in war-time.

Butler therefore determined to deal with educational reform, in the first instance, through negotiations with the interested parties who had received the Green Book, and these commenced in the autumn of 1941. The negotiations, in so far as they concerned the religious settlement embodied in the Act, have been fully documented by Miss Travis, who commented that the existence of a coalition was immensely important for the enactment of the Bill⁵.

The terms of the religious settlement caught much of the limelight and were crucial to the passing of the Bill. But there were other major issues at stake during the debates on the White Paper on Educational Reconstruction and on the Education Bill. Certain of these were directly

1. Cmd.6458, HMSO, July 1943.

2. Hansard, Commons, 391, 29-30 July, 1943; Lords, 128, 4-5 August, 1943.

3. See Hansard, Commons, 399, 12.5.44. Cols. 2245 and 2198.

4. Marjorie A. Travis, Dual System Reform 1941-44. M.A. Education Thesis, London University, 1950, p.48.

5. Ibid.

relevant to the shaping of secondary schools policy after the war, and it is these which will be reviewed now.

(iii)

The 1943 White Paper proposed three main types of secondary schools to be known as grammar, modern and technical schools. The possibility of combining different types in one building or on one site was mentioned and transfer for pupils between the types of education was to be facilitated¹.

Clearly none of the proposed schools would be housed in new buildings in the immediate future. Old buildings had to be used and each type of school envisaged in the White Paper had its own historical origins. The grammar schools would be the continuation of those schools known until then as the secondary schools. It was recognised that these enjoyed prestige in the eyes of parents by virtue of their tradition, superior premises and staffing, the longer school life of its pupils and the access they gave to the universities and the professions. The modern schools would be the continuation of the former senior schools which had grown out of the upper forms of the elementary schools, especially as a result of the reorganisation for children over eleven subsequent to the Hadow Report of 1926. The technical schools would emerge from the former junior technical schools. The progress of the latter had been slow, and entry at thirteen had adversely affected their chances of recruiting the most able children who, at eleven, usually had gone to grammar schools.²

In future, all types of secondary schools were to be conducted under one code of regulations, replacing the then existing secondary and elementary codes. The standards of the modern schools would have to be raised to those of the grammar schools. Fees were to be abolished in all secondary schools maintained by the LEAs³. The leaving age was to be raised to fifteen as soon as possible after the war and to sixteen at a later date⁴.

1. Cmd. 6458, para.31.

2. Ibid, paras. 28-30.

3. Ibid, para.34.

4. Ibid, para.22.

This was the statement of intent. Actually, the Education Bill, unlike the White Paper, refrained from referring explicitly to the three types of secondary schools, thus leaving it open what pattern of secondary organisation LEAs were to adopt after the war.

The Parliamentary debates revealed certain fears about several aspects of the Government's education reform proposals. Some Members of Parliament believed that the position of the grammar schools and their high standards of achievement were threatened; others, on the contrary, that real parity between the different types of schools would not be achieved. The main issues over which these respective fears were revealed were the school leaving age, the future relationship between the grammar schools and the LEAs, methods of selection for different types of schools and the abolition of fees for secondary education generally but their retention for the direct grant schools.

The Education Bill stipulated no date when the school leaving age would be raised to 16. It was the Coalition Government's policy to raise the age from 14 to 15 as a first priority within two years of Part II of the Act¹ coming into effect. The Government argued that a date could not be fixed for raising the age to 16 because the reorganisation of senior classes in the old elementary schools had first to be completed. The division on the school leaving age, one of the few on the Bill, obtained the largest anti-government vote. An amendment was moved by a Conservative Member proposing that the leaving age be raised to 16 within four years of its being raised to 15. The Coalition Government secured a majority of only 35, 137 voting for, 172 against the amendment².

Critics of the Government argued that equality of opportunity required a leaving age of 16, and that part-time education for the 15-18 age group in County Colleges was not a satisfactory alternative³. In

1. Education Act, 1944, Part II: The Statutory System of Education. This Part of the Act came into operation on 1.4.45; the school leaving age was raised to 15 two years later.

2. Hansard, Commons, 398, 21.3.44. Col.755/6.

3. In Committee, Butler promised to tighten the Bill to make the establishment of County Colleges a duty for LEAs within 3 years of a leaving age of 15.

order to prepare their development plans, LEAs would need a target date for the higher leaving age. Furthermore, proper reorganisation of senior classes in the former elementary schools would necessitate a leaving age of 16, so that suitable courses could be designed. Without the challenge of an extra two school years, too little thought would be given to the content of education for the non-academic adolescents. Different types of school would not achieve parity of status so long as the majority left school at 15. Delay in raising the leaving age to 16 would perpetuate the superior status of the grammar schools.

The grammar schools had had a privileged position in the country's school system, educating a small minority of the age group 11-16, and an even smaller one aged 16-18. They had admitted LEA scholarship holders since early in the century, but a varying proportion of their pupil rolls had been made up of fee-payers. This was true of all kinds of grammar schools, though LEA provided and maintained schools tended to have a lower, grant-aided schools a higher, proportion of fee-payers.

The receipt of fees had given independence to both school and parent. The parent could choose the particular school for his child, the headmaster could decide whom to admit. Even though fees from parents did not cover the whole cost of secondary education, schools had had through receipt of fees a degree of financial independence from the LEA. The loss of this independence was by some Members considered a danger to the high standards of the grammar schools; freedom from LEA parochial control was thought to be essential to enable the maintained grammar schools to compete with the fee-paying 'public' schools. Other Members, on the contrary, were worried lest the LEAs had inadequate control over the type of schools in their areas when drafting development plans. They treated the plea for independence as a plea for privilege, revealing suspicion of democratically elected LEAs.

Butler accepted that the new system into which all secondary schools would have to fit would mean the grammar schools'

"relationship with the education authorities will be, in many cases, much more closely defined than before ... Hitherto, while the relationship between modern schools and authorities

has been closely defined, that between grammar schools and the authorities has not."¹

But he tried to reassure critics on all sides that, under the Bill, articles of government for secondary schools would have to be made and approved by the Minister. Observance of essential principles governing the relationship between the LEA and the schools could thus be secured. Discussions were in progress about this matter and a White Paper would be published setting out the relevant principles². Butler made it clear, however, that the curriculum could not be outside the purview of LEAs, as certain schools might under development plans be required to specialise³.

Given that there would be different types of secondary schools, it was of great importance how and by whom the decision would be made as to which type of education suited particular children. In the past, the majority of children had remained in the senior forms of their elementary schools. Others had been transferred at the age of 11 to selective central schools or higher tops, or, increasingly, to the modern schools, or (at the age of 13) to junior technical schools. Only a minority had succeeded in the competitive examination at about eleven and entered grammar schools as free or special place holders, or had gone to these schools as fee-payers by choice of their parents. What would be the position in future? The Education Bill gave no indication other than that children were to be educated according to their age, abilities and aptitudes.

The weight of opinion was strongly against selection by examination⁴. The 1943 White Paper held that

1. Hansard, Commons, 397, 9.3.44. Col.2271/2.

2. Principles of Government in Maintained Secondary Schools. Cmd.6523, HMSO, May 1944.

3. Hansard, Commons, 397, 9.3.44., Cols.2273-5 and 2279.

4. See: Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools (Norwood Report), HMSO, June 1943. This Report laid the basis for much of the White Paper's content both on examinations and types of secondary schools.

"... children at the age of about 11 should be classified, not on the results of a competitive test, but on an assessment of their individual aptitudes largely by such means as school records, supplemented if necessary, by intelligence tests, due regard being had to their parents' wishes and the careers they have in mind. ..."¹

The White Paper on Principles of Government in Maintained Secondary Schools, issued in 1944, gave the clearest answer as to where the ultimate responsibility would rest for the decision as to the type of secondary school to which a child should be sent:

"... the LEA alone will have all the data on which to reach a decision on these matters and ultimate responsibility for deciding which type of secondary education an individual pupil should follow must therefore rest with them..."

But the difficulty of the decision was immediately made clear by adding that, whatever the particular methods of procedure,

"...governors and the headmaster ... should play an essential part in the selection of all pupils for their particular school ..."

and that

"Account would need to be taken of school records, teachers' reports, and parents' expressed wishes... parents should be free within reasonable limits to choose the particular school of the appropriate type..."²

Butler tried to assure Members that parents would be able to choose the secondary school to which their child would go, and himself moved an amendment that pupils were to be educated "in accordance with the wishes of their parents."³ This was welcomed in particular by Roman Catholic spokesmen and can be regarded primarily as meeting the claim of parental preference on denominational grounds. But there were considerable fears that, with the abolition of fees, parents would lose their effective choice of school. What, for example, would happen to the child considered by the LEA suitable for a modern school course whose parents wanted a grammar school? Butler gave a rather ambiguous reply to these fears:

1. Cmd. 6458, para.27.

2. Cmd. 6523, para.21.

3. Hansard, Commons, 397, 15.2.44, Col.138.

"... as to whether parents who desire a particular type of secondary education could influence the authority, (this) is covered on the same footing as the point about children of different denominations. It may be that a child is suitable, or not suitable, for a particular form of secondary education, there may be a bloc of parents who desire a form of technical education, or ... boarding education. All these demands will be very easily met by the insertion of this general duty."¹

Fears concerning the effect of the abolition of school fees on parental choice and on the independence of secondary schools were also reflected outside Parliament. The Government had in 1942 set up the Fleming Committee to consider means whereby the association between the Public Schools and the general educational system could be developed and extended. In August 1943 this Committee's Special Report² on the Abolition of Tuition Fees in Grant-Aided Secondary Schools appeared. It argued that in order to make parental choice a reality, a proportion of the places in grant-aided and fully maintained secondary schools should be reserved for admission of pupils by school governors. This would give parents who were dissatisfied with the LEA's selection the opportunity to apply for admission to the governors of their preferred school. There was a majority and minority report. Both agreed about the desirability of a proportion of places being at the Governors' discretion. The majority stressed

"the principle that the parents' choice, unhampered by financial considerations, should be regarded as the most vital element in deciding to which school a child should go, whatever system is adopted for determining the entries to the different types of schools."³

Thus the majority wanted fees abolished in all grant-aided schools. The minority disagreed about this and recommended that in direct grant schools fees be retained for the governors' places, either full or graded according to the financial circumstances of the parents. The objection that retention of fees would exclude pupils whose parents could not afford the fees was dismissed. The existence of the free place system

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1. Hansard, Commons, 397, 16.2.44. Col.198-99.
 2. Special Report of Fleming Committee on the Public Schools and the General Educational System: Abolition of Tuition Fees in Grant-Aided Secondary Schools. HMSO, 1943.
 3. Ibid, Majority Report, page 16, para.43.

would allow access for all children, and if there ever was a shortage of places, then the LEA had the duty to provide more. The minority gave a clue as to one of their real worries by concluding

"... under present conditions we do not see why a parent who wishes with good reason to send his child to a grammar school should be compelled against his will to send him to a modern school, with the sole alternative of an independent school, public or private."¹

Butler had commissioned this interim Report on fees from the Fleming Committee because it was necessary to settle the Government's policy on this controversial matter before the Education Bill was introduced². The majority report had eleven and the minority report seven signatories. Butler accepted the minority recommendation as far as the direct grant schools were concerned, and under the Act these remained fee-paying schools. On the other hand, grammar schools which were grant-aided by LEAs, were covered by the Act's prohibition of fees.

This decision by the Coalition Government to exempt one particular type of grant-aided school from the abolition of fees was welcomed by some, severely criticised by other Members of Parliament. The available evidence strongly suggests that this issue had been the subject of keen negotiation, and that the Government had changed its mind before finally announcing its decision. Pressure to permit the retention of fees by LEA grant-aided grammar schools must have been strong, but this pressure was resisted. In the debate on the White Paper on Educational Reconstruction in an exchange between a Labour Member and the Parliamentary Secretary, it was made clear that fees would be abolished in all LEA aided schools, but that no decision had yet been taken with regard to those schools receiving direct grant from the Board of Education. The Labour Member then stated that he understood that the Fleming Committee had already discussed this and had recommended that all schools receiving

1. Abolition of Tuition Fees in Grant-Aided Secondary Schools, HMSO, 1943. Minority Report, page 23, para.6.

2. Although a recommendation on fees would not concern the independent 'public' schools, some grant-aided schools were treated as 'public' schools for the purposes of the Fleming Committee, and these would be affected by the Committee's recommendations.

public money should be free. If fees continued to be charged, it would give these schools a special status.

"I would like to know whether it is possible for that Report to be in the possession of the House and whether it is the intention of the Government to act on that recommendation."¹

The next day, the Parliamentary Secretary promised that the interim report of the Fleming Committee on fees would be available within a month.²

The precise sequence of events is significant. The interim report on fees was commissioned in November 1942. The Report on Abolition of Tuition Fees in Grant-Aided Secondary Schools was signed on 2nd April, 1943, but was not published until August, by which time Parliament had risen. Thus the White Paper on Educational Reconstruction, published and debated in July, was considered by Members of Parliament who were still in ignorance of the contents of the interim report. The result was that this report on the controversial question of fees was never separately debated in Parliament.

Although the White Paper left the specific future of the direct grant schools open³, it contained a general statement which might have induced the conclusion that all fees would in fact be abolished. It held that not all places in grammar schools had in the past been filled by the ablest candidates. The Regulations had required no more than that 25% of the yearly admissions should be confined to pupils whose admission was

"independent of their ability to pay the prescribed fee,... and although this percentage is very often greatly exceeded, it remains true that many children get the benefit of secondary education owing to the ability of their parents to pay fees.

"... A system under which fees are charged in one type of post-primary school and prohibited in the other offends against the canon that the nature of a child's education should be determined by his capacity and promise and not by the financial circumstances of his parent."⁴

1. Hansard, Commons, 391, 29.7.43, Col.1852.

2. Ibid, 30.7.43, Col.2043.

3. See Cmd.6458, Para.32: "It is not possible here and now to reach a conclusion about the future of these schools as a class...".

4. Cmd.6458, para.20.

Clearly at the time of the debate on the White Paper, Lord Soulbury, who as H. Ramsbotham had been Butler's predecessor at the Board of Education, favoured the abolition of fees in all publicly aided schools:

"... If there were no fees in schools that obtained their grants from the LEA, but fees were retained in schools that got direct grants from the Board of Education, we should get a rather curious distinction between the rate-aided school and the tax-aided school¹ - a distinction that I should find slightly difficult to justify".

However, by the time the Bill reached the Lords for its second reading, Lord Soulbury did justify the distinction, reiterating in the Upper House the arguments Butler had used in the Lower. He also voiced the fear that an increasing number of parents might send their children to independent schools if fees were abolished in direct grant schools. That would certainly not be in accord with the objects of the Bill:

"the cleavage... between types of schools would be more acute than at present."²

In the Commons, Butler was more specific. If fees were abolished, he maintained, some governors of direct grant schools might leave the state system and then raise their fees. This would accentuate social distinctions.³

Thus the direct grant schools were regarded as a bridge between the state and private sector of education. Those who wanted to abolish direct grant fees wanted to pull the schools firmly into the state sector, whilst those who favoured retention feared pushing the schools firmly into the private sector.

Butler promised accessibility to fee-paying schools for poorer parents would be guaranteed through the LEA free-place system, as recommended by the interim Fleming Report. The abolitionists argued, however, that this system would involve "creaming off", which would give the fee-paying schools a higher reputation and "snob status", which in turn would make parents more willing to pay fees. These fee-paying

1. Hansard, Lords, 128, 4th and 5th August, 1943, Col.1063.

2. Ibid., 132, 8.6.44., Col.145.

3. Hansard, Commons, 396, 19.1.44, Col.222/3.

parents would then have an advantage in access to the schools. As a consequence, social distinctions would flourish. Further, abolitionists feared that some LEA-aided schools might try to achieve direct grant status in order to continue charging fees, and that this would mean an extension of the means test to parents not in a position to pay fees. Whilst agreeing that there should be a variety of schools, these critics wanted educational need, not finance, to be decisive. They held that direct grant schools were not justified on grounds of variety; far more experimental work had been done in state schools.

Butler defended the Government's decision on four main grounds. First, it was not immoral for parents to contribute financially to the education of their children provided accessibility to fee-paying schools was guaranteed to poorer parents. This would be done under new regulations. Second, there was no great shortage of grammar school places. Revision of the Direct Grant List would enable the Minister to ensure that in areas where a high proportion of the grammar school provision was in direct grant schools, LEAs either secured an adequate proportion of the available places or the status of the schools was changed. Third, the issue was one of comparatively small dimensions: only 4% of the schools concerned would be able to continue charging fees¹. Fourth, it was a fundamental principle of the Bill that there should be variety of types, and diversity of choice, one of which was fee-paying.

To the challenge that retention of fees would perpetuate social distinctions, Butler answered

"... education cannot, by itself, create the social structure of a country. It can very considerably influence it and .. the fact that we have got priority for this great Bill will very much influence the world in which we hope to live in the future. But I have to take the world as I find it, ... the economic arguments to which hon. Members opposite may apply their minds on other occasions... affect the structure of our society and our democracy even more than do the poor efforts of a Minister of Education... the world I find is one in which there is a very diversified range of types."²

1. Hansard, Commons, 398, 28.3.44. Col.1301.

2. Ibid., Col.1302/3.

On this issue of fees in direct grant schools, as on the school leaving age, there was a division in the House of Commons. The abolitionists received 95, the Government 183 votes, a majority of 88.¹ It was claimed by one of the Labour members that in both these divisions, many members of his Party had voted against the Government as a matter of party policy². Certainly in the debate on fees, A. Greenwood, deputy Labour Leader, asked his supporters to divide against the Government³. Another Labour member claimed that on a free vote, retention of fees would have been defeated⁴.

One might ask why the Government apparently changed its mind on this important issue between the White Paper's appearance in July 1943 and the introduction of the Bill in December of that year. Why was publication of the interim report on fees delayed until after Parliament had risen? What were the pressures on the President of the Board of Education? No final answer to these questions can be given without access to Department of Education and Science original sources. But two interviews pointed to the pressures. One backbench M.P., who played an important part in the debates, stated that the Governing Bodies' Association and the Headmasters' Conference had pressed Butler on the fee question. If the direct grant schools went into the LEA sector, they feared it would be the beginning of an attack on the public schools⁵. On the other hand, the Parliamentary Secretary who, next to Butler, was closest to the negotiations, said that in his view direct grant fees should have been abolished, because he believed in free education throughout.

"But it was a party matter. It was a great concession to wrench from the Conservatives to get fees abolished in secondary schools."⁶

Butler himself made it clear soon after the 1945 General Election that he had given an undertaking to the representatives of the direct

1. Hansard, Commons, 398, 28.3.44. Col.1309/12.

2. Ibid., 4.4.44. Col.398.

3. Ibid., 28.3.44. Col.1298.

4. Ibid., Col.1277.

5. Interview: Mr. Kenneth Lindsay.

6. Interview: The late Lord Chuter Ede.

grant schools that the Direct Grant List would remain substantially the same. The Coalition Government had accepted this, and Butler was greatly alarmed when his successor, Ellen Wilkinson, told the House of Commons that

"There has been a General Election and I think that on this matter of direct grant schools the party which I represent does not see eye to eye with hon. Members opposite."¹

The new Labour Minister was reluctant to accept all the applications for inclusion in the revised Direct Grant List, because her Party stood for the principle of free secondary education. A reduced direct grant list was drawn up in due course. Butler attacked this as the first departure from the confidence and balance he had achieved under the Coalition Government during the war.

1. Hansard, Commons, 414, 16.10.45. Col.1085.

Chapter 2

The 1944 Education Act

Introductory

The 1944 Education Act consists of five Parts. Part I dealing with Central Administration and Part V entitled "Supplemental" came into force on the 3rd August, 1944, the day when the Education Bill received the Royal Assent. Part II on the Statutory System of Education and Part IV headed "General" operated from 1st April 1945. Part III on the Independent Schools came into force only on 30th September, 1957.

In this chapter certain Sections of the 1944 Education Act¹ will be explained. Those Sections with direct bearing on some of the main aspects of secondary schools policy and administration, and relevant as background to the study which follows, have been selected. The legislative framework, however, left open the question as to how the secondary schools system should be organised. The Act did lay down that secondary education was to be provided in separate schools from primary education, but was silent on the type of secondary schools which were to be established.

In order that local secondary schools policy may be seen within the context of national policy, the relevant Ministry of Education Circulars are reviewed in relation to the statutory powers and duties of Minister and LEAs respectively. Reference will also be made, where appropriate, to certain regulations issued under the Act.

The chapter falls into four sections. The first deals with national secondary schools policy in the light of the statutory powers and duties of Minister and Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to provide

1. There have been several amending Acts, but to date the 1944 Act remains the Principal Act. Where appropriate, amending legislation will be dealt with in this chapter.

secondary education. The second shows more specifically how the Act divides powers for the provision of secondary education between the Minister and the LEAs. Here the statutory obligations for the preparation of the development plan and for the establishment or discontinuance of individual schools will be outlined. In the third section the rights and duties of parents under the Act will be explained, whilst the fourth will cover the fee-paying direct grant and independent schools.

(a) National Policy in the light of Statutory Powers and Duties

"I do propose that the central authority shall lead boldly, and not follow timidly..."¹

In these words, R.A. Butler contrasted the provisions of the 1944 Education Bill with those of the 1870 Education Bill, of which the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lowe, had said

"Instead of leading boldly we follow timidly."²

At that time the state had followed the private societies which in England had promoted education before 1870. In 1944, Mr. Butler resisted an amendment which would have resulted in the omission of the words "under his control and direction" in Section 1 of the Act, which defined the duties of the Minister of Education³. That duty is to

"promote the education of the people of England and Wales..., and to secure the effective execution by Local Authorities, under his control and direction, of the national policy for providing a varied and comprehensive educational service in every area."⁴

The Local Education Authorities are under Section 6(1) of the 1944 Act the County Councils and County Boroughs. Part III of the First Schedule of the Act laid down the procedure for the establishment and delegation of certain education powers by the LEA to Divisional Executives within County areas. As educational administration in Middlesex was profoundly affected by the creation of Divisional Executives, this aspect of the Act will be dealt with in the next chapter. Here it suffices to say that the resulting two-tier local government structure for education was designed to meet the problems and protests caused by the abolition of the former Part III Authorities, responsible for elementary education under the 1902 Education Act⁵.

1. Hansard, Commons, 396, 8.2.44. Col.1658.

2. Ibid.

3. Now the Secretary of State for Education and Science. In this chapter the word "Minister" will be used.

4. Education Act, 1944, 7 & 8 Geo.6, Ch.31. Section 1. In the remainder of this chapter Section numbers quoted will relate to the 1944 Act unless stated otherwise.

5. The local authorities exercising elementary education powers under the 1902 Act were called "Part III Authorities" because these powers were conferred on them by Part III of that Act.

Under Section 108(2) of the Act it was the Minister's duty to constitute or secure the constitution of Education Committees and Sub-Committees for each LEA. The First Schedule, Part II, specified in detail that all LEAs were required to establish an Education Committee in accordance with arrangements approved by the Minister. The LEA is empowered to delegate its functions to this Committee, except the power to borrow or raise a rate. The Education Committee may in turn appoint Sub-Committees and delegate its functions to them, but whereas the proceedings of the Education Committee and its Minutes are open to the public, those of the Sub-Committees are not¹. Each LEA has under Section 88 to appoint a Chief Education Officer, and no candidate for this post may be appointed without the Minister's approval.

It is clear, then, that the establishment of the local government structure for the running of the education service was under the statutory control of the Minister of Education. Furthermore, he has to secure effective execution by LEAs

"...of the national policy for ... a varied and comprehensive educational service..."

What, then, is that national policy to be? Here the Act lays down only very broad principles. Section 7 states that there shall be three stages of the system of education - primary, secondary and further education - and that it is the duty of LEAs to secure efficient education throughout these stages. Before 1944, the duty of LEAs had been restricted to elementary education. Secondary education was provided (in grammar schools) for a minority of the population under powers conferred on County Councils and County Boroughs by Section II of the 1902 Act. These powers were then known as the "Higher Education" powers.

Under Section 8 of the new Act it is the LEAs duty to secure sufficient schools for both junior and senior pupils. Furthermore, primary and secondary education is to be provided in separate schools. This involved LEAs in the task of reorganising all-age schools which had existed under the former Elementary School Code. The compulsory

1. See especially Sub Sections (1), (8), (9) and (10) of Part II of the First Schedule.

school age under Section 35 is from 5 to 15 years, with provision for the leaving-age to be raised to 16 by Order in Council when the Minister is satisfied this is practicable. Section 61(1) prohibits the charging of fees for education in schools maintained by LEAs.

The provision of secondary schools for senior pupils in an area

"shall not be deemed to be sufficient unless they are sufficient in number, character, and equipment to afford for all pupils opportunities for education offering such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of their different ages, abilities, and aptitudes, and of the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school, including practical instruction and training appropriate to their respective needs."¹

Two points immediately arise. The first question to be answered is at what age does a junior pupil become a senior one, and what is the procedure for transfer from the primary to the secondary school. The Act is silent about the procedure but specific about the age. Section 114 defines a junior pupil as one who has not attained the age of 12 years, whereas a senior pupil is one who has attained that age but is not yet 19 years old. Without changing these definitions in the Principal Act, an amending Act in 1948 defined more precisely the ages between which a pupil is to be transferred to the secondary school. The amending Act gave LEAs the power²

"to make arrangements with respect to a primary school maintained by them... under which any junior pupils who have attained the age of 10 years and six months... to be withdrawn therefrom for the purpose of receiving secondary education."

Further³,

"the managers and governors of schools maintained by a local education authority shall comply, as respects the time of admission of children as registered pupils, with any general directions given by the authority..."

Clearly the 1948 amending Act provided statutory powers for the establishment by LEAs of procedures for transferring children from the junior to the secondary school between the ages of 10 years 6 months and 12 years. Just what those procedures were to be was left open, and

1. Section 8 (b)

2. Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1948, 11 & 12 Geo.6, Ch.40. Section 4(1).

3. Ibid., Section 4(3).

was in any case bound to be influenced by the particular system of secondary schools which the LEA inherited or in the course of time established.

The second and more important question is, then, how LEAs and the Minister interpreted the very broad definition of "sufficient"¹ with reference to secondary school provision. The Act gives no guidance for judging what constitutes "sufficient" provision of secondary schools, other than that there shall be variety and that the schools shall cater for the different ages, abilities and aptitudes of the children.

Over the years the Minister's attitude to secondary school organisation changed considerably, and this changing policy is reflected in Ministry of Education Circulars and other statements. To the extent that an LEA requires under the Act ministerial approval for its policies, this study of one LEA's secondary schools policy will serve to highlight the influence of national policy on the education service at local level. But Part II and III of the Thesis also illustrate how one LEA interpreted Section 8 of the Act according to its own changing needs and values.

As shown in the last chapter, the 1943 White Paper on Educational Reconstruction proposed three main types of secondary schools - grammar, technical and modern. The Coalition Government was no doubt influenced in particular by two Reports which had recommended such a secondary schools structure. These were the Spens Report, published in 1938, and the Norwood Report, published in 1943². The three types of school were to be given parity of conditions and, it was hoped, to enjoy parity of esteem in due course. Professor Dent claimed that the Spens proposals for a tripartite structure were made a doctrine by Norwood³.

1. 1944 Act, in Section 8(b) as quoted above.
2. Board of Education. Report of the Consultative Committee on Secondary Education (Spens). HMSO. 1938.
Board of Education. Report of the Committee of the Secondary School Examinations Council on Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools (Norwood). HMSO, 1943.
3. H.C. Dent, Secondary Education for All, Routledge, 1949.

Why was tripartitism not written into the Act? Probably because there was some opposition to this form of school organisation. At the 1950 Labour Party Conference Alice Bacon claimed that protests from the National Executive of the Labour Party after the 1943 White Paper had appeared explained the omission from the 1944 Act of the three types of school¹. Several workers have traced the development in this country of the idea of the multilateral and the comprehensive school. All these studies point to the interest that was shown in the multilateral school at various times in the 1920s and 1930s by the TUC, the Labour Party, and the National Association of Labour Teachers². But supporters of the multilateral principle did not come from Labour organisations only. Teacher organisations which supported the 'multi-bias' school at one time or another included the NUT, the Association of Assistant Masters, the Association of Headmistresses and the Association of Assistant Mistresses³.

The attention given to the multilateral form of school organisation by these various organisations no doubt compelled the Spens Committee seriously to consider the idea. Miller⁴ has pointed out that the Spens Committee did not condemn the multilateral school out of hand. It found

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1. Olive Banks, Parity and Prestige in English Secondary Education. Routledge 1955, p.133.
 2. See especially: Olive Banks, op.cit.
T.W.G. Miller. Values in the Comprehensive School. Oliver & Boyd, 1961.
T.W.G. Miller. A Critical and Empirical Study of the Emergence, Development and Significance of the Comprehensive Secondary School in England, with special reference to certain educational and social effects. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Birmingham, 1958.
R.G.H. Andrews. The Comprehensive School: Its Theory and Practice. M.A. Education Thesis. University of Durham, 1963.
 3. Olive Banks, op.cit., pp.138-9.
 4. T.W.G. Miller, Ph.D. Thesis, p.63-66.

the idea attractive, especially for areas of new population. But objections were raised on grounds of size, difficulties of sixth form organisation and the problem of securing suitable headmasters.

In any event, given that the 1944 Act was silent on secondary school organisation, the partners in education - Ministry and LEAs - had to settle the pattern in the course of time. For a number of years the Ministry of Education, under Labour and Conservative Ministers alike, upheld the merits of the three types of school, although gradually the rigidity of this approach gave way to varying degrees of flexibility.

A tremendous task faced the LEAs after the 1944 Act, and some guidance on policy from the Ministry of Education must have been welcomed by them. Circular 28¹ drew attention of LEAs to the pamphlet The Nation's Schools², which contained the first detailed proposals of the Ministry as to how the secondary schools system should be shaped. It was issued in the month when the Coalition Government broke up, shortly before the General Election of 1945. But its policy was endorsed by the new Labour Minister soon after the General Election, in Circular 73³.

The Nation's School advocated the tripartite pattern of grammar, modern and technical schools. Whilst not dogmatic on the proportion of children suited to each of these types of school, it was suggested that in the country as a whole there might with advantage be some reduction in grammar and an increase in technical school intake⁴. This view was expressed for a number of years by the Ministry, and is understood only in the light of the hopes which were held for the development of both the technical and the modern schools.

The grammar schools were essentially regarded as schools providing a seven-year course from 11-18 years of age, leading to university and the higher professions. Far too many grammar school pupils left school without taking school certificate and something like a quarter were even

1. 8.5.45.

2. Ministry of Education Pamphlet No.1. The Nation's Schools. Their Plan and Purpose, HMSO, 1945.

3. 12.12.45.

4. The Nation's Schools, para.47. At this time approximately 20% of secondary school children were in grammar schools.

withdrawn before reaching 16¹. Some of these pupils might find courses better suited to their aptitudes and abilities in technical or modern schools. Indeed, the technical schools had suffered from being regarded as second-best, having creamed the elementary schools a second time at 13 after the main transfer to grammar schools at 11².

It was the prospects felt to be within the reach of the modern schools which illustrated the idealism of the time. Their possibilities were too little understood³.

"Free from the pressures of any examination, these schools can work out the best and liveliest forms of secondary education suited to their pupils. It is essential that they should retain this invaluable freedom... and should be enabled to advance along the lines they themselves feel to be right."

These schools would have to face a "definite educational problem". Increased mechanisation in industry would increase the number of routine and repetitive jobs, and thus large numbers of adults would find little in their work to keep their minds alert. Their education must therefore develop their resources to find and pursue interests which would add meaning and enjoyment to life. Use of the project method would stimulate interests in a way that formal classroom lessons could not⁴.

Some attention was given to the multilateral school. In sparsely populated areas it might be necessary to bring a variety of the three types of secondary education together in one school. Elsewhere there was⁵

"room for judicious experiment... before we can feel any confidence that we know what is best for the children."

On the whole, the multilateral experiment was not favoured. Its attractions were said to be avoidance of selection at 11 and the social advantage of bringing together children of different types. But the problem of selection had to be faced and was not necessarily easier to solve within one than between three schools. The claim that only through the multilateral form of organisation would 'parity of esteem' be

1. The Nation's Schools, paras.51, 57.

2. Ibid., para.62.

3. Ibid., para.77.

4. Ibid., para.78.

5. Ibid., para.84.

achieved was not accepted. This depended on changes in accepted social values. Education would have to be valued, irrespective of its content, for its achievements in making the most of individuals¹. Furthermore, the multilateral school would have to be very large to offer full variety of courses².

"Innovation is not necessarily reform ... it would be a mistake to plunge too hastily on a large scale into a revolutionary change..."

The idea of a joint campus of three types of school was looked on more favourably. Each school should remain a separate entity, but staff could interchange and pupils could mix through joint activities³.

Ellen Wilkinson, Labour Minister of Education, was put under pressure from the Labour Party to withdraw the Ministry's first pamphlet, The Nation's Schools, and at the 1946 Annual Conference she promised to do so and to redraft it in accordance with Labour's policy. But she defended the tripartite system all the same⁴. Her first Circular, No.73, issued in December 1945, had already viewed the possibility of multi-lateral schools with slightly less suspicious eyes, although it still referred LEAs to The Nation's Schools for guidance on the general principles for secondary organisation. LEAs would at the outset have to think of three types of schools, if for no other reason that the existing buildings, which had to be used. But it was⁵

"not contemplated that this separate classification of schools will be irrevocable, nor is there anything in the Education Act to suggest that it should be. On the contrary..., the conception of 'secondary schools' of varying curricula and age-ranges may well, through the development of the modern school, gradually replace the classification of schools into grammar, technical and modern."

1. The Nation's Schools, paras. 85 and 86.

2. Ibid., paras. 87 and 89.

3. Ibid., para. 90.

4. T.W.G. Miller, Ph.D. Thesis, based on Labour Party Annual Conference Report, 1946, pp.191-195.

5. Circular 73, para.2.

Grammar schools were still regarded as providing a course to age 18 for most of their pupils. Although it was now held that it would be unwise drastically to reduce the annual intake into grammar schools until satisfactory alternatives were available¹,

"any increase... is likely to hinder rather than help the proper development of secondary education. The additional pupils so admitted may not only find themselves committed to curricula which are not best suited to them, but may in fact jeopardise the standards and objectives which are and must be peculiar to the grammar school type of education. Furthermore, their withdrawal from the modern or technical schools in which they would appropriately have been placed would handicap the organisation and development of these schools."

There was renewed concern for the proper development of the modern schools, and their position was to be carefully considered by LEAs contemplating the establishment of multilateral schools².

"Where... a multilateral school is planned it will generally be desirable that it should include provision for all modern school pupils in the locality; the continuation of separate modern schools side by side with a multilateral school will inevitably place them at a disadvantage and will detract from their prestige from the outset."

Four conditions were stated under which the Minister was prepared to consider proposals from LEAs for bilateral or multilateral schools: First, that the proposed site and premises be adequate; second, that the school provide suitable alternative courses for all pupils; third, that the school's organisation would not prejudice the position of other maintained schools in the area; and fourth, that large schools be so designed as to be capable of effective separation into smaller units should this prove desirable later³.

In less than three months yet another Circular was issued. Circular 90⁴ again stated that the Minister adhered to the general principles set out in The Nation's Schools. Some LEAs were thought to be considering plans for a general system of bilateral or multilateral

1. Circular 73, para.4.

2. Circular 73, para.7.

3. Circular 73, para.8.

4. Circular 90, 8.3.46.

schools, and further guidance was therefore offered. The fact that no "hard and fast" line could be drawn between grammar, technical and modern provision¹,

"...should not .. be allowed to obscure the necessity for clearly defined and adequately developed courses of the different kinds required to meet the special interests and abilities of different groups of pupils."

Proposals to combine technical education with either grammar or modern in one school would be carefully scrutinised to ensure adequate scope for development and experiment. Provision for a 'technical' stream within a grammar school by the mere addition of one or more practical rooms was not likely to be approved. Nor would proposals for separate 11-13 schools be entertained as a method of postponing the problems of allocation to appropriate courses².

By the summer of 1947, Ellen Wilkinson's pledge to the Labour Party Annual Conference the preceding year was honoured. The Ministry published The New Secondary Education³ and The Nation's Schools was withdrawn. Circular 142⁴ drew attention to the pamphlet. The writing of the foreword was one of the last actions of the Minister before her death:

"No child must be forced into an academic education which bores it to rebellion, merely because that type of grammar education is considered socially desirable by parents who could afford to pay for it. This means that there must be parity of esteem between the different types of school."⁵

Yet even if buildings and size of classes were equalized, Ellen Wilkinson doubted whether this parity could be achieved without parity of social esteem for the various occupations into which school leavers went. This doubt was expressed as a certainty by two authors many years later. Both Olive Banks⁶ and William Taylor⁷ concluded that the occupational

1. Circular 90, para.6(i)(a).

2. Ibid., para.6(i)(b).

3. Ministry of Education. Pamphlet No.9. The New Secondary Education, HMSO, 1947.

4. Circular 142, 9.6.47.

5. The New Secondary Education, page 4.

6. Olive Banks, op.cit.

7. William Taylor, The Secondary Modern School, Faber, 1963.

implications of secondary education set a limit on the extent to which a school could secure parity of esteem in its own terms rather than on those dictated by society.

The new pamphlet still outlined the three types of secondary education although it emphasised the common elements in the education offered by different schools, and the need for easy transfer. The assumption that the "top layer" of ability would always go to the grammar school was contrary to the 1944 Act. It should be possible for the brightest and ablest children to go to that type of school which best accorded with their interests, aptitudes and the kind of careers they had in view¹. It was one of the effects of the 1944 Act that²

"grammar schools in the future will be enabled to concentrate more fully than they have done in recent years on their proper function. Now that there are to be other types of secondary schools specifically designed to provide for pupils whose aptitudes require a different kind of approach, there should be no need for the grammar school to go on organising modified courses and adapting its curriculum to meet the requirements of pupils for whom its own form of education is not really appropriate."

And the proper function of the grammar school was to provide seven-year courses for the academic minded child, which would bore other children to rebellion.

The modern school's distinguishing feature was its "very broad outlook and objective". Parity of conditions should be afforded the modern schools by LEAs. The schools should be liberally staffed, there should be generous expenditure on books and equipment. The 'secondary' status of the school could be advertised by school uniforms, caps and blazers. But even given parity of conditions, parity of esteem the modern schools would have to achieve by their own efforts³.

The Minister desired⁴

"to lay down no set guides for organisation but to encourage local authorities to plan as best suits their local needs. ... where conditions are favourable the best way of carrying out the new

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1. The New Secondary Education, page 55.
 2. Ibid., page 26.
 3. The New Secondary Education, page 30.
 4. Ibid., page 24.

plan may be to combine two, or three, types of secondary education in one school. Current controversy ... has shown the disadvantages, as well as the obvious advantages, in such an organisation."

If the multilateral school was adopted, adequate variety of courses must be provided, transfer between them should be easy, and opportunity should be given to the abler as well as the less able children to develop fully. It was doubted whether this could be done in schools smaller than 10-11 form entry for 1,500 - 1,700 pupils. The idea of a "campus plan" again received a favourable mention¹.

So far, schools providing two or three 'types' of secondary education under one roof had by the Ministry been referred to as 'multilateral' schools. Meanwhile, however, the word 'comprehensive' had also appeared on the scene. Even before the Education Bill had received the Royal Assent, the Education Committee of the LCC had already agreed that its Plan should aim at "a system of comprehensive high schools". In a reformed system there was no place for senior or modern schools, separate from other types, since such

"a school would have an inferior status in the eyes of parents because it would in practice provide solely for those who fail to secure admission elsewhere."²

There was obviously a good deal of confusion about the precise meaning of these and some other terms, just as there was uncertainty about the best lines of development for implementing secondary education for all.

Circular 144³ tried to put order into chaos by a series of definitions. Bilateral, multilateral and comprehensive were given the following meanings⁴:

"a bilateral school means one which is organised to provide for any two of the three main elements of secondary education, i.e. modern, technical or grammar, organised in clearly defined sides;

"a multilateral school means one which is intended to cater for all the secondary education of all the children in a given area and includes all three elements in clearly defined sides;

1. The New Secondary Education, page 25.
2. Times Educational Supplement, 22.7.44, page 354.
3. Circular 144, 16.6.47.
4. Ibid., para.3 (a)(b) and (c)

"a comprehensive school means one which is intended to cater for all the secondary education of all the children in a given area without an organisation in three sides."

A school campus or base¹

"means a group of schools, usually unilateral, in separate buildings and each with its own headmaster..., catering for all the secondary education of a given area, but having certain common facilities and possibly sharing staff resources."

Finally, the phrase "common school" was also met, and this could appropriately cover either a bilateral or a multilateral school².

The Circular reiterated certain basic principles to be observed when two or more types of education were combined in one school. First, provision was not to be less favourable than under the tripartite pattern; second, unilateral provision should not exist in the catchment area of a combined school offering that type of education; thirdly, balance should be maintained between the provision of grammar, technical and modern type courses³.

For a bilateral school it was proposed that the size should be 4 form entry for grammar-technical schools, 9 form entry for modern-grammar or modern-technical ones. The multilateral school would have to be larger: 10-11 form entry with 6-7 modern, 2 technical and 2 grammar streams. In schools smaller than 6 form entry the multilateral principle would be unreal. The comprehensive school should be of the same size as the multilateral⁴.

The Nation's Schools had proudly proclaimed that the modern schools would be free from examination pressures. This attitude did not change until 1955. Ministry opinion during and for a few years after the war was strongly opposed to the widespread use of external examinations in schools. Even the work of the grammar schools was too much dominated by university examinations. In 1946, Circular 103 had suggested that there was much to be said for the grammar schools not entering pupils for any examination until 17 or 18 years of age⁵. In 1948 Circular 168

1. Circular 144, para.3(d).

2. Ibid., para.4.

3. Ibid., para.5.

4. Ibid., paras. 7, 9, 11.

5. Circular 103, 16.5.46, para.4.

announced that in 1951 the existing School and Higher School Certificate Examinations would be discontinued and that examinations for the General Certificate of Education at Ordinary, Advanced and Scholarship levels would take their place. It was stressed that only candidates who had a good chance of success should be entered, and no candidate under 16 on the 1st September in any given year would be permitted to sit Ordinary level papers¹.

The Ministry's policy on external examinations for secondary school pupils no doubt had its place in Ministry attempts to get grammar schools to concentrate on seven-year academic courses for pupils staying on to 18². Another reason for this policy, stated in Circular 256, was the belief that concentration on an examination syllabus restricted the initiative of teachers and ran counter to the emphasis on meeting the individual needs of pupils which the 1944 Act required³. It was claimed that the new General Certificate of Education examination system was expressly designed to give schools a large measure of freedom⁴. In the General Certificate of Education, unlike the School Certificate, all subjects were optional, there were no minimum or group requirements⁵. The Ministry possibly hoped in this way to introduce a breath of fresh air into the grammar school curriculum and to give these schools some measure of the freedom which had been proclaimed as the greatest asset of the modern schools.

But the Ministry was to be sadly disappointed. Not only did grammar schools continue to put their pupils in for General Certificate of Education Ordinary levels, but modern schools started to do likewise. This was not without implications for secondary school organisation. The demand to have General Certificate of Education courses in secondary

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1. Circular 168, 23.4.48, paras.11, 12, 13. The age restriction was removed in 1953 (See Circular 251, 28.4.42), to enable bright children at grammar schools to enter earlier.
 2. Olive Banks, op.cit, p.206.
 3. Circular 256, 4.9.52, para.3.
 4. Ibid., para.14.
 5. Circular 168, para.12(b).

modern schools was a form of pressure from the schools to reduce the significance of the tripartite divisions in the educational system. By the mid-fifties the eleven plus was being criticised and undoubtedly one reason was that neither parents nor teachers accepted that occupational choice should be settled at the early age of eleven. It gradually became evident that allocation to modern schools for children who 'failed' the eleven plus would no longer be tolerated unless such children had a chance of access to the higher education ladder, and with it to the higher status jobs.

Since the Conservative Government in the fifties continued to be opposed to the comprehensive school, it had little alternative but to raise the status of the modern school, by giving ministerial blessing to a process already under way¹. Circular 289 on Examinations in Secondary Schools² showed the first substantial shift in the Government's policy from the separation of secondary schools and pupils into three distinct types. It was now admitted that³

"Boys and girls do not fall neatly into distinct types... The Minister therefore regards it as essential that no modern school pupil should be deprived of the opportunity of entering for the examination for the General Certificate of Education if his Head thinks that he has the necessary ability and persistence."

This was a far cry from proposing that only those grammar school pupils who had a real chance of passing should be entered for the O level examinations. The Circular stated that some modern school pupils might take longer to reach the necessary standard than grammar or technical school pupils. Local circumstances should determine whether the modern school pupils could best be given the opportunities they ought to have by transfer to other schools, to technical college, or by the provision of O level courses in the modern schools. In the last case⁴,

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1. The changing status of the modern school is fully discussed by William Taylor in The Secondary Modern School, see especially chapter VI.
 2. Circular 289, 9.7.55.
 3. Ibid., para.2.
 4. Circular 289, para.3.

"Schools should ... be careful not to sacrifice the interests of the majority of their pupils to meeting the needs of the small minority who are entering for the General Certificate of Education examination."

Such schools should ^{not} build up a General Certificate of Education course "for reasons of prestige when the pupils concerned would be better advised either to transfer to another school or to follow some different course.."

Despite this acceptance of a fait accompli¹, the Minister still hoped to save the majority of modern school pupils from the restrictive influence of external examinations. He opposed the establishment of a new general examination of national standing other than the General Certificate of Education as well as the widespread use by the schools of privately organised external examinations. He was not prepared to change the Grant Regulations under which no pupil under 16 on or before 1st September in a given year could be entered for an external examination, except for the General Certificate O level on the specific recommendation of the Head. Although more pupils were staying on beyond the leaving age of 15, this Regulation precluded the majority of modern school pupils from taking external examinations because of early leaving. However, the Minister was prepared to welcome experiments by groups of schools to run their own examinations, provided they retained control of the syllabuses and courses².

Within two years Circular 326³ indicated that the pressure from modern schools to participate in competitive examinations was mounting. The Minister had been urged to encourage the establishment of an examination of a standard lower than the General Certificate of Education which could be taken at 16 or earlier. He had also been asked to amend the regulations which prevented candidates under 16 from entering external examinations, so that younger pupils might have access to privately organised examinations⁴. The Minister, however, was not prepared to

1. In 1954, 357 Modern Schools had entered 5,500 candidates for General Certificate of Education papers (Para.3, Circular 289).

2. Circular 289, paras. 16 and 19.

3. Circular 326, 3.7.57.

4. Ibid., para.4.

make any interim arrangements before the Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) on the education of the 15-18 age group was available¹. This appeared two years later as the Crowther Report.

It was actually subsequent to the Report of the Central Advisory Council on 15-18, which appeared in 1959, that the Beloe Committee was established, which in due course reported in favour of a new examination for Secondary Modern School pupils which ultimately led to the establishment of the Certificate of Secondary Education². But that would take the study of national policy beyond the confines of this particular thesis.

The acceptance of General Certificate of Education examination courses in secondary modern schools for some pupils was not the only move by the Minister to meet mounting criticism of the eleven plus selection procedure. Late in 1958 the Government published a White Paper on Secondary Education for All: A New Drive³. It was pointed out that after the 1959 and 1960 entry to the secondary schools, the pressure of numbers would subside until the late 1960s, when numbers would rise again. The next 5-6 years therefore offered an unparalleled opportunity for a vigorous policy to improve the schools⁴.

"We must ... eradicate a more general defect in our system of secondary education - a defect which is the root cause of the concern that is currently felt over what has come to be known as the '11-plus examination'. The fact is that there are ... too many children of approximately equal ability who are receiving their secondary education in schools that differ widely both in quality, and in the range of courses they are able to provide. And this means that a number of these children are not getting as good opportunities as they deserve."⁵

Because the secondary modern schools in many areas had not yet received the resources they needed⁶

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1. Circular 326, para.5.
 2. William Taylor, op.cit., p.117.
 3. Cmd. 604, HMSO, December 1958.
 4. Ibid., para. 8.
 5. Ibid., para.10.
 6. Ibid., para.11.

"many parents still believe that, if their children go to a secondary modern school, they will not have a fair start in life... the anxiety of parents over '11-plus' will be finally allayed only when every secondary school, no matter what its description, is able to provide a full secondary education for each of its pupils in accordance with his ability and aptitude."

It was also in the nation's interest that all potential sources of skilled manpower were used to the full¹.

A child's performance at eleven should not determine the remainder of his school career once and for all. But this did not mean that selection could be abolished. No matter how secondary education was organised, if justice was to be done to the different needs of individual children, they must be grouped for courses suited to their particular capacities². It was not the wish of the Government to impose a uniform pattern of secondary education. Rigidity would contradict the concept of a service locally administered within the framework of national policy. Thus the Government did not wish to rule out experiments with comprehensive schools proposed on genuinely educational grounds. Indeed, there were two types of area which satisfactorily made out a case for such schools. These were rural areas with a sparse population and new housing areas where no schools with "a well-established tradition" existed³.

Doubts were voiced about the wisdom of establishing very large comprehensive schools; only a most exceptional man could infuse a spirit of unity into a school of over 2,000. Other ideas were being tried, for example in Leicestershire, which avoided selection at eleven for separate schools but at the same time involved neither the establishment of very large schools nor damaging the integrity of well-established existing schools⁴. As for proposals for a new comprehensive, which involved the end of an existing grammar school with a long and distinguished history simply in order to give the new comprehensive

1. Cmd. 604, para.12.

2. Ibid., para.13.

3. Ibid., para.14 and 15.

4. Ibid., para.17 and 18.

"a monopoly of the abler children within its area", this was quite another matter¹.

"It cannot be right that good existing schools should be forcibly brought to an end, or that parents' freedom of choice should be so completely abolished."

Most LEAs in any case preferred to regard the merits of such experiments still unproved. These Authorities retained in their area a system of secondary schools²

"which maintains a distinction between the ranges of capacity for which they cater."

But there was plenty of room for variation in the precise pattern of organisation, so long as all secondary schools were good in their own ways and so long as courses in grammar and modern schools overlapped to the extent that the capacities of pupils overlapped³.

Circular 342⁴ was issued on the same day as the White Paper on Secondary Education for All. It announced that a five-year programme would be inaugurated for school building. The programme for 1960/1 and 1961/2 would be settled as quickly as possible as a first instalment. In planning their proposals for the five-year programme, LEAs and diocesan bodies were asked to bear in mind the rising demand for courses extending beyond the statutory leaving age in all kinds of secondary schools⁵.

For seven years Secondary Education for All: A New Drive expressed the Government's policy. The next change came with Circular 10/65 on Organisation of Secondary Education⁶, issued by the Labour Secretary of State for Education and Science which asked LEAs to submit proposals for the reorganisation of secondary schools in their area on the comprehensive principle. This, however, opened a new chapter and one which goes beyond the confines of this thesis.

1. Cmd. 604, para.16.

2. Ibid., para.19.

3. Ibid., para.19 and 20.

4. Circular 342. 3.12.58.

5. Ibid., Paras. 2, 5, 7.

6. Circular 10/65. 12.7.65.

Between 1944 and 1964, then, the central government interpreted Section 8(b) of the 1944 Education Act in the main by recommending to LEAs a policy of secondary provision based on three separate types of school. In the earlier years the government hoped for a limitation, if not a reduction, in the proportion of children placed in *grammar* schools, the majority of whom would stay on for a full seven-year academic type course. It hoped for an increase in technical school provision. The modern schools would cater for the majority of the earlier school leavers and it was envisaged that exciting new educational developments would be possible through freedom from external examinations.

In fact, by the late 1950s, as the Crowther Report stated, we did not have, nor ever had had, a tripartite system. Over 40% of the LEAs had not provided technical schools, and for the great majority the secondary modern school was the type of school attended after the age of eleven¹. Examinations were being taken in modern schools and encouragement was being given to these schools to develop extended courses to meet the needs of the growing number of pupils who stayed on beyond the statutory leaving age.

Over the years, Labour and Conservative Governments alike opposed any widespread introduction of multilateral and comprehensive schools. Policy statements concentrated on pointing to the merits of each type of school on the one hand and the difficulties of the multilateral or comprehensive school on the other. Two difficulties were stated again and again: the large size of the school if all children were to be afforded adequate provision of courses for their abilities and aptitudes; and the problem of finding suitable headmasters who could create within such a large organisation a corporate spirit for all its members.

However, neither Labour nor Conservative Ministers ever shut the door on experiment. There was to be no nationally imposed pattern of secondary organisation. For sparsely populated rural areas multilateral

1. 15-18. Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education - England. Vol.I. Ministry of Education, HMSO, 1959, pp.21-22.

or comprehensive schools were even considered a good idea, and in the later 1950s areas of new housing were also looked upon more favourably for the experiment. But the spokesmen of neither Party were prepared to see the existing, well-established grammar schools touched. This was, perhaps, implicit rather than explicit in the early post-war years under a Labour Government. When the 1958 White Paper was published by the Conservative Government no one was left in doubt about this matter.

It will be seen in later chapters on secondary schools policy in Middlesex that when the LEA did attempt to incorporate an existing grammar school in a comprehensive scheme, that attempt proved an utter failure.

(b) Division of Powers between the Providing Partners

Sections 9 to 16 of the 1944 Education Act deal with the establishment, maintenance and discontinuance of schools. Apart from the definition of powers and duties of Minister and LEAs respectively, it is these sections of the Act that contain the legal basis for the dual system. Schools which are established by the LEA are known as County schools, if established otherwise, as Voluntary schools¹. But whether the LEA has established a school or it has been established otherwise, the LEA has power to maintain such schools².

Section 15 classifies voluntary maintained schools into controlled, aided and special agreement schools, and stipulates the circumstances in which a voluntary school shall by order of the Minister be designated either an aided or special agreement school. The remaining voluntary schools shall be controlled schools. The main differences are firstly that for an aided or special agreement school the voluntary society carries the financial responsibility for establishing the school and for keeping the buildings in a good state of repair, although under Section 102 the Minister provides financial assistance to meet this capital expenditure³. For controlled schools voluntary societies have no financial responsibility. Secondly, the founders of an aided or special agreement school have two thirds representation on the school governors, whereas those of a controlled school have only one third. The remaining governors are LEA nominees⁴. There are further differences concerning the appointment of teachers and denominational religious instruction in voluntary schools. But as this thesis is not dealing with the dual system, these detailed statutory provisions are not relevant here. For the same reason it will be the establishment or discontinuance of County

1. Section 9(2).

2. Section 9(1).

3. The Minister's contribution under the 1944 Act was 50% of capital expenditure. Amending legislation raised this to 75% in 1959, and more recently to 80%.

4. Section 19(2).

Schools which will be the main subject matter in the remainder of this section.

LEAs, then, have powers to establish and maintain County schools, and to maintain voluntary schools. Under Section 10(2) a duty is laid upon LEAs to secure that the premises of every school maintained by them conforms to the prescribed standards which the Minister shall (under Section 10(1)), incorporate in regulations. It is under Section 10 that the Minister issues Building Regulations as well as Standards for School Premises Regulations¹.

But the Minister's powers extend far beyond the prescription of standards for school premises. No new county school shall be established, nor an existing one discontinued, without first submitting proposals to the Minister under Section 13(1). The Minister may approve LEA proposals after making such modifications as appear to him desirable under 13(4), and Section 13(5) of the Act is most emphatic that the LEA

"shall not, without the leave of the Minister, do or undertake anything (whether or not provided for by the development plan for the area) for which proposals are required by this section to be submitted to the Minister until such proposals have been approved by him."

And even after approval, Section 13(6) requires the LEA to submit plans of school premises which the Minister may approve if he is satisfied that they conform to the required standards.

Thus even when proposals for the establishment of new or discontinuance of existing schools have been incorporated in the LEA's development plan, which requires the Minister's approval, the Minister can still, at a later stage, refuse to sanction the execution of such proposals in the case of particular schools. The Minister, furthermore, under the Grant Regulations issued under Section 100(a) of the Act, exercises control over proposals to provide new premises or alter existing ones of already established schools².

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1. J.A.G. Griffiths, Central Departments and Local Authorities, Allen & Unwin, 1966. Part II, Chapter 2, on School Building, p.109 and p.164.
 2. See, for example, The Schools Grant Regulations, 1951, S.I.No.1743, Part II, 6(2).

It is relevant here to mention that the Minister's influence over school provision extends beyond his statutory powers, through the selection of projects for priority treatment from the LEAs building programme. Indeed, there is no statutory authority for a building programme.

"The provisions of Section 13 do not ... give a statutory basis for the administrative practice of programming, that is, of requiring LEAs to submit to the Department groups of projects for particular financial years out of which the Department make selections. For this practice there is indeed no statutory authority. If a local education authority obtained an approval under Section 13 and proceeded to plan the construction of the school without programme approval, they would not by that act alone be contravening any general statutory requirement. The Department would have to rely on specific powers to control it - such as withholding loan sanction..."¹

Thus in the provision of schools the Minister definitely has the ultimate power, even though LEAs have the power to establish new schools and therefore in practice take the initiative in doing so. The provision of voluntary schools is also under the ultimate control of the Minister, through it is then not the LEA which takes the first initiative. Although Section 13(2) of the Act states that proposals for voluntary schools shall be submitted by the persons concerned to the Minister, after consultation with the LEA, by administrative practice such proposals are in fact submitted through the LEA to the Minister².

Preparation of a development plan for an area for primary and secondary education was a duty placed on LEAs by Section 11 of the Act. This Section contains certain general stipulations about the preparation of the development plan and many details about the obligations of the LEA to consult governors of voluntary schools, and about procedures for objections to be raised against a draft plan. Under Section 11(1) every LEA was required to estimate the immediate and prospective needs of the area under the Act and its regulations. This was to be done within one year of Part II of the Act coming into force, or during such

1. J.A.G. Griffiths, op.cit., p.102.

2. Ibid., p.124.

an extended period as the Minister might allow. The plan had to be submitted to the Minister in such a form as the Minister directed and had to show the action an Authority proposed to take to ensure that sufficient primary and secondary schools shall be available, and the measures to be taken to accomplish same.

The plan, under Section 11(2) had to specify which schools in the area were to be county and which voluntary primary or secondary schools. The ages of the pupils and the nature of the education to be provided in particular schools had to be stated. Alterations to buildings necessitated by the Act and by new Regulations had to be specified and estimates furnished. Details of new schools required, whether county or voluntary, had to be given.

Under Section 11(4) the Minister was required to approve the plan after consideration of objections and after making such modifications which, after consultation with the LEA, he considered necessary or expedient to ensure proper provision was made for the needs of the area. Subsequent to approval, publicity was to be given to the plan. Approval in itself did not affect the LEA's duties, but under Section 12 the Minister was to make a Local Education Order specifying the county and voluntary schools it is the duty of the LEA to maintain. The same Section outlined a procedure for varying a Local Education Order and for such an Order to be laid before Parliament in the event of the LEA concerned objecting to it.

The Act does not require LEAs to amend or revise or resubmit to the Ministry for approval any changes in the development plan. Some local authorities keep their plan formally up to date as individual projects are completed or abandoned, whilst others regard the plans as having only historical interest.

"Today a school development plan reads like the marching orders of some remote campaign in a long-forgotten war."¹

The Middlesex LEA actually did keep its Development Plan up to date, and thus on its dissolution handed over to the new Outer London Boroughs

1. J.A.G. Griffiths, op.cit., p.106.

a completely revised plan for their guidance.

For the purposes of the thesis the most important Sections of the Act here referred to are Sections 11 and 13. Once the Middlesex LEA had submitted its Development Plan, the Minister had to approve it under Section 11(4), and in doing so had to consider objections. He was also empowered to ask the Authority to reconsider the Plan for example on the grounds that in his opinion it failed in certain respects to make proper provision for the needs of the area. Beyond this his power to control the establishment of new schools and the discontinuance of existing ones under Section 13 gave him a further opportunity to raise objections to particular school projects, included in the approved development plan, when the time for the implementation of proposals came.

The Act certainly makes the Minister the senior partner in the provision of schools. In practice he relies heavily on LEAs for initiative in establishing adequate school places. But the Minister's powers under the Act do enable him to restrict the direction in which LEAs effectively exercise their powers in the secondary schools field. The thesis will show that at any particular time the Minister could and did prevent the LEA from pursuing certain policies which were at variance with the then current national policy on secondary school organisation.

(c) Parents' Duties and Rights

Before 1944, a parent had to "cause his child, between the ages of 5 and 14, to receive efficient elementary instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic."¹ Under the 1944 Act, Section 36, it is the duty "of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability, and aptitude, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

Education suitable to age, ability and aptitude, or the three As, was substituted for instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic, or the three Rs.

If the parent fails in his duty to cause the child to receive suitable education, under Section 37 it becomes the duty of the LEA to ensure that the child does receive it. But the procedure of Section 37 is extremely complicated. It illustrates how the Act - even at a time when a parent is thought to be failing in his duty - protects the right of a parent to have his child educated in accordance with his wishes. An LEA's first duty is to serve a notice on the non-complying parent requiring him to satisfy the LEA, within a specified period which must not be less than fourteen days, that the child is in fact receiving full-time education suited to his age, ability and aptitude². If the parent fails so to satisfy the LEA, then the Authority shall serve a school attendance order on the parent, requiring the child to become a registered pupil at a school named in the order. But Section 37(2) enables the parent to select the school, and unless the Minister directs otherwise, that school shall be named in the school attendance order³. Thus if the Authority is of the opinion either that the school selected

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1. H.C.Dent, The Education Act 1944. University of London Press, 3rd Edition, 1947, p.43.
 2. Section 37(1).
 3. Section 10 of the 1953 Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act sets a time limit of 14 days during which a parent must exercise his option to select a school. If he does not exercise it, then the school specified by the Authority shall be named in the school attendance order.

by the parent is unsuitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude, or that attendance at that school would involve the Authority in unreasonable expense, the Authority can, after notifying the parent of its intention to do so, apply to the Minister for a direction on the school to be named in the order¹.

Under Section 37(4) a parent whose child is subject to a school attendance order can make application for that order to be revoked if alternative arrangements have been made. A parent who fails to comply with an order is guilty of an offence under Section 37(5) and Section 40 provides for enforcement of the order by prosecution and fines for conviction.

It is Section 76 which sets out the general principle, to be observed by Minister and LEAs, that children are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents. The Section states:

"In the exercise and performance of all powers and duties conferred and imposed on them by this Act the Minister and local education authorities shall have regard to the general principle that, so far as is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents."

This means that there are only two grounds on which the views of Minister or LEA would prevail against those of parents in the event of a conflict. The Minister or LEA would have to claim either that the education desired by parents is incompatible with "the provision of efficient instruction and training" or that "unreasonable public expenditure" was involved. Section 76 gives parents a strong statutory position under the Act.

It was seen that choice of school by the parent is a statutory right under the school attendance order procedure of Section 37. Parental choice of school is a very important part of the concept that children are to be educated in accordance with their parents' wishes. But the 1944 Act neither makes specific mention of the right to choose a school (except in the special circumstances of a school attendance

1. Section 37(3).

order) nor does it indicate how that right might be exercised. Choice of certain schools could involve travelling expenses. In this case, Section 55 of the Act would prove relevant. Section 55(1) of the Act states that LEAs

"shall make such arrangements for the provision of transport and otherwise as they consider necessary or as the Minister may direct for the purpose of facilitating the attendance of pupils at schools ... and any transport provided in pursuance of such arrangements shall be provided free of charge."

This presumably covers cases of children who cannot attend a suitable school at all without transport being arranged by the LEA. In that case the cost of travel has to be borne by the Authority. But a parent might wish to choose a more distant school than the nearest suitable one, and the question then arises whether the parent is entitled to free transport for his child.

Here Section 55(2) is of interest:

"A local education authority may pay the reasonable travelling expenses of any pupil in attendance at any school ... for whose transport no arrangements are made under this section."

Whereas Section 55(1) states that free transport shall be provided, Section 55(2) states that the LEA may pay reasonable travelling expenses. This sub-section is, therefore, relevant to parental choice of a school other than the nearest suitable one. But how should an Authority decide whether part or the whole of the travelling expenses involved in the choice of a particular school are "reasonable"?

An early Circular entitled Choice of Schools gave LEAs some guidance on this and certain other problems facing LEAs. Circular 83¹ suggested, for example, that if parents desired a child to attend a school further away than the nearest suitable one on denominational or other reasonable grounds, the LEA might arrange transport if satisfied that this could be done within the limits of existing services and that these were accessible to home and school at the right times of day, that the chosen school was suitable in the sense that it provided efficient instruction and training, that the journey was not undesirable

1. Circular 83, 14.1.46.

on health grounds, that the distance was reasonable in the sense of not involving unreasonable public expenditure.

"In estimating what can be regarded as reasonable ... distinction might appropriately be drawn between ... modern and other types of secondary schools on the ground of the larger provision of modern schools."¹

Presumably this meant that a more expensive journey might be justified for a chosen technical or grammar school because effective choice between schools of these types could be exercised only over a wider area.

The whole question of choice of school for secondary education was obviously a difficult one for LEAs after the 1944 Act. Fees had been abolished in maintained schools and parents could thus not "choose" a grammar school simply by virtue of being able to pay for a place - unless, of course, they opted out of the state system. As different types of school existed and as the Ministry of Education favoured a tripartite pattern of school organisation, it was a moot point who should settle which type of secondary school was the one suited for a particular child. Circular 83 stated that the wishes of parents should in this connection be considered,

"but the decision, depending as it normally does upon the ability and aptitude of the child as revealed by his performance in the primary school, must necessarily rest primarily with the LEA."²

Once the "appropriate type" of school had been settled, as much freedom should be given to parents to choose individual schools, subject to any views of the school governors, as was consistent with efficient organisation and reasonable economy of public expenditure. In particular, the following grounds leading to preference for a particular school of any given type should be given consideration:

- "(a) the denominational character of the school;
- (b) preference for an existing school of a single sex or mixed type;
- (c) convenience of access;
- (d) educational considerations, e.g. the provision of a particular type of advanced work in an individual school."³

1. Circular 83, para. 7.

2. Ibid., para. 3.

3. Ibid., para. 3.

The practice of establishing geographical zones for schools restricted parental choice of school. LEAs were advised to confine this practice to districts where it was clearly necessary, for example to avoid overcrowding. Care should be taken to meet reasonable denominational preferences and other exceptional cases when zoning proved necessary¹.

In general, no rigid rules could be universally applied. Appeals could always be made to the Minister under the Act, and in considering such appeals he would have to have regard to the general principle set out in Section 76. Attention was drawn by the Circular to the requirement, under the Schools Grant Regulations, that admission to a school shall not be refused on other than reasonable grounds².

In 1950 a Manual of Guidance was published by the Ministry³. This amplified further the grounds on which parents might reasonably choose one school rather than another. In addition to those listed above, the following were suggested as valid grounds⁴:

- a younger child would be escorted by an older brother or sister on the journey to and from school;
- family association existed with the chosen school;
- the school was desired for medical reasons.

Attention was drawn to provisions in the Schools Grant Regulations which governed admission of children to schools maintained by an Authority other than that where the child resided, so as to facilitate parental choice across LEA boundaries⁵.

Three years later, Circular 268⁶ drew attention to the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1953. During the passage of the Bill the question had been raised as to whether LEAs should be required by law to give public notice of zoning schemes. The Minister held the view

1. Circular 83, para.5.

2. For example, see 1951 Schools Grant Regulations, S.I.1743, Section 13(1).

3. Ministry of Education. Manual of Guidance. Schools No.1. Choice of Schools. 23.8.50. HMSO. (Reprinted with minor amendments in September 1960).

4. Ibid., para.7.

5. Ibid., para.14.

6. Circular 268, 17.8.53.

that a statutory provision was not desirable. He was satisfied that LEAs introduced such schemes only when need justified them and that the restrictions were removed as soon as possible.

"There can be no doubt, however, that the establishment of zone boundaries is a matter of deep public concern.."¹

and Authorities were therefore reminded that parents had the right of appeal under the Schools Grant Regulations and under Section 68 of the Act, if they considered that their children had been unreasonably refused admission to a particular school. Authorities should inform parents before they introduced zoning and should take parents into their confidence on the reasons for such schemes and the likely effects for their children.

Section 68 of the Principal Act referred to in this Circular gives power to the Minister to prevent the unreasonable exercise of functions by LEAs. Action under this would, however, be regarded as rather extreme. In 1951 the Minister had been advised that he should act under Section 68 only in circumstances in which the unreasonableness of the action is manifest. He should not rely on Section 68 where an LEA took a line not in conformity with national policy, which was not in itself unreasonable².

So far parental choice of school has been considered in general terms. This attempt to comprehend the grounds on which parents are entitled to claim that their child shall attend one school rather than another leads naturally to the next section on the fee-paying schools. It will be seen there that parents are entitled to exercise their right of choice not merely as between different schools within the maintained system, but that in given circumstances the Act entitles them to choose a fee-paying school for which the LEA pays part or the whole fees.

1. Circular 268, para. 21.

2. Ministry of Education. Reports of the Ministry of Education Sub-Committee to the Local Government Manpower Committee, July 1951, para. 8. (Available DES Library).

(d) The Fee-Paying Schools

The 1944 Education Act provided, for the first time, for the registration of independent schools¹. Section 70 gave the Minister powers to exempt any school or class of school from the procedure of applying for registration. Such schools were to be automatically registered. When this part of the Act came into force in 1957, the only schools which were actually exempted were those which were already recognised as efficient by the Ministry at the beginning of the autumn term 1957². The independent fee-paying schools dealt with in Part III of this thesis came into the exempted class.

Apart from the independent schools, one other type of fee-paying school was left in existence by the 1944 Act. Section 61(1) of the Act prohibited fees in all maintained schools. But the direct grant schools received their grant-aid from the Ministry, not from the LEAs, and were under the Act not part of the maintained system. Fees continued to be charged by them.

After the war the list of direct grant schools was revised. The Minister had considered the recommendations of the Fleming Committee on the Public Schools and the General Educational System. Circular 32³ informed LEAs of this and explained that the conditions for receiving direct grant would change. The new conditions, to be embodied in Grant Regulations in due course, were explained. Schools not previously grant-aided were not eligible for consideration. The procedure was that governors had to apply to the Minister for inclusion in the revised list. The Minister would then consult the LEA concerned. In making their application, governors should express willingness to comply with conditions of grant and include information as to the way they proposed to meet the expenses of maintenance of the school, the cost of repairs,

1. Part III, Sections 70-75.

2. Tyrell Burgess, A Guide to English Schools, Pelican, 1964, p.93.

3. Circular 32, 16.3.45.

alterations and any necessary improvements¹.

The 1945-46 revision of the direct grant list in fact resulted in a reduction of the number of schools recognised for grant. There had been 232, and this was by 1947 cut to 166. Circular 319² announced the re-opening of the list with a view to the admission of a limited number of schools. By 1962 the number had risen to 179. In considering applications, the Minister would pay particular attention to the educational quality of the school, its size, especially of the Sixth Form, that the regulations on admission of pupils could be complied with and that the school was able to meet its financial obligations for capital expenditure³.

It was made quite clear that the Ministry would not make grants towards capital expenditure on the improvement, extension or construction of new school premises, although approval of plans and estimates of cost of proposed work is required. It is, however, possible for an LEA - with Ministry approval under Section 9(1) of the 1944 Education Act - to make grants towards capital expenditure, but the cost falls wholly on the rates, since such assistance by an LEA

"whether of a maintenance or capital nature ... will not attract grant from the Exchequer."⁴

Both pre-war and post-war this was the position as far as LEA grants were concerned. At the time when the Direct Grant List of Schools was revised in 1945-46, and when it was re-opened in 1957, it was made clear that a school applying for inclusion must show

"that it would, if admitted to the list, have sufficient funds either from its own endowments or from other resources to enable it to meet its financial liabilities, including any necessary capital expenditure."⁵

In this respect the war-time Coalition Government disregarded the 1944 Report of the Committee on Public Schools, which recommended (as part of its proposed Scheme A for public day schools) a change in this matter:

"...contributions by LEAs towards the capital costs of alterations and improvements should be allowed with the approval of the Board (of Education), and grant would be paid by the Board to the Authority on such expenditure."⁶

1. Circular 32, para. 5.

2. Circular 319, 7.1.57.

3. Ibid., para.3.

4. Circular 32, para.3(viii).

5. Circular 319, para.3.

6. The Public Schools and the General Educational System. Report of the Committee on Public Schools, appointed in July 1942. Board of Education, HMSO, 1944. Para. 177(vii), p.64.

It was shown in Chapter 1 that many people at the time of the debate on the Education Bill regarded the direct grant schools as a bridge between the state (maintained) and private (independent) school sectors. In this thesis the direct grant schools are treated as belonging to the private rather than the state sector, partly because they were the only schools which continued to charge fees after the 1944 Act whilst also receiving public grants. The more important reason is, however, that the evidence contained in the thesis clearly shows that the relations between direct grant schools and the LEA did not differ substantially from those between certain independent schools and the LEA. This relationship existed mainly because the LEA placed some of its pupils in fee-paying schools, and the statutory basis for doing this has to be explained.

Since the 1944 Act empowers LEAs to establish both county and voluntary maintained schools, and since it is usually more expensive to send pupils to non-maintained schools, the question arises why LEAs were given powers to use fee-paying schools. There were two main reasons, both of which are embodied in the original and amending Acts. The first was the shortage of school places in the maintained system. This, however, required a definition of 'shortage'. The second reason was the desire to extend parental choice, under Section 76 of the Act, to schools which were not part of the maintained system.

Shortage of places and parental choice must now be seen in terms of the LEAs' statutory duties and powers. These are not identical for direct grant and independent schools, even though the working relationship between the LEA and the two types of fee-paying schools was almost the same. The Ministry has regarded the direct grant schools as part of the state system since they are grant-aided schools. Separate Direct Grant Schools Regulations are issued under Section 100 of the 1944 Act, under which Ministry grant-aid is given. The precise differences between direct grant and independent schools only gradually became apparent during the early post-war years. Ministry guidance was given in Circulars and elsewhere, and in 1953 an amending Act clarified the statutory position.

It was stated earlier that one of the first duties of the LEAs under the 1944 Act was to prepare and submit to the Minister development plans for their area. Section 11(2)(d) required that the Development Plan include any proposed arrangements to be made by the LEA with schools not maintained by the Authority, for the purpose of helping to secure that there shall be sufficient primary and secondary schools available. This was the first implicit statutory reference to the fact that some LEAs would be short of school places in the maintained sector and would therefore have to buy places in the fee-paying sector. But Section 11(2)(d) gave no indication whether LEAs had a duty to pay the whole of the fees for such places or whether they were merely empowered to assist with fees so as to avoid hardship to children and parents. Section 81 of the Act seemed the one that might provide the answer.

Section 81(b) confers powers on LEAs under regulations made by the Minister

"to pay the whole or any part of the fees and expenses payable in respect of children attending schools at which fees are payable."

But such payments shall be made

"for the purpose of enabling pupils to take advantage without hardship to themselves or their parents of any educational facilities available to them."

The hardship proviso limits an LEA's powers to those of assistance under an income scale, and this Section of the Act certainly does not impose a duty on LEAs to pay the whole fees of a pupil attending a fee-paying school.

Yet the Ministry intended that LEA places in direct grant schools should be free to parents, just as those in maintained schools were. The Grant Regulations provided for payment of fees in total by the LEA. The reason for this was given in Circular 26¹. Direct grant school places taken by LEAs

"are to be regarded as supplementing the local provision made by the Authority. It is for this reason that the education is to be provided free to the parent and no recovery of cost of tuition made from them."²

1. Circular 26, 13.3.45.

2. Ibid., para. 8.

Evidently the fact that direct grant school places were treated as "supplementing" local provision was the crucial point. As children at LEA maintained schools received a free education, so should those children who happened to be placed in a direct grant school. But the same Circular asked LEAs to submit to the Minister a statement of proposed arrangements for meeting the expenses and fees of pupils they enabled to attend independent schools. Details were to be given of the fees and expenses involved and of any remissions which were to be allowed to parents¹. Thus even if the law was unclear, there was no doubt that the Ministry from the beginning expected LEAs to pay the whole fees of pupils placed by them in direct grant schools, but not necessarily to do so in the case of independent schools.

Administrative Memorandum No. 244² explained that LEAs

"may be expected to accept full or partial responsibility for pupils attending direct grant or independent schools"³

in two circumstances. First, where the maintained provision was insufficient in amount or educational character; second, where the maintained schools were sufficient in these respects but parents' wishes for their children to be educated at other schools could be met compatibly with the provision of efficient instruction and training and without unreasonable public expenditure as stipulated in Section 76 of the Act. As regards pupils in the first category, no distinction should be made between them and pupils in maintained schools - no expenses should fall on their parents. Thus full fees should be paid by the Authority for places at direct grant and independent schools which were necessary to supplement the maintained provision. For those in the second category different considerations applied, and the Authority could satisfy the requirements of Section 76 by exercising powers under Section 81, thus ensuring parents' choice without hardship. If parents, for example, desired their child to attend an independent school on denominational

1. Circular 26, para.10.

2. Adm.Memo.No.244, 2.9.47.

3. Ibid., para.2.

grounds, and a maintained or direct grant school of that denomination was not available, then the LEA could pay or contribute towards fees and travelling expenses on an income scale. Such arrangements required the Minister's approval¹.

When in 1950 the Ministry issued a Manual of Guidance entitled Choice of Schools² it was pointed out that free places at independent schools, under Section 9(1) of the 1944 Act, should be taken by LEAs only if required to make up a deficiency of an educational character. Parental choice under Section 76 was limited by the requirement to avoid unreasonable public expenditure, and by and large, places in the public system in maintained schools and accessible direct grant schools, should suffice to give effect to parents' wishes.

"There will, however, be areas where to make up deficiencies of an educational character, whether in quantity or quality, it will be necessary to take up places at independent schools. In such cases, the arrangements made by the authority ... should be such as to secure that no charge for tuition is made to the parent. These are the only circumstances in which the Minister considers that Authorities may assume responsibility for independent school fees without regard to the parents' means, and, though he would not wish to preclude a reasonable degree of flexibility, he would expect that the normal procedure followed by authorities would be to take up a fixed number of places at predetermined independent schools, as in the case of direct grant schools. These places would be available to meet parents' wishes on the same footing as the provision in grant-aided schools."³

However, apart from these free places at independent schools (free to parents, not to the LEA), the Manual of Guidance also dealt with assisted places at independent schools. These could be made available by exercise of powers under Section 81, even where the provision of free places was precluded, in order to widen parental choice⁴. But as Section 81 covered cases of hardship, the LEA could do no more than assist parents to meet fees at an independent school under this Section. It was added that flat rate grants were not acceptable - an income scale

1. Adm.Memo.No.244, paras. 3-5.

2. Manual of Guidance, Schools No.1. op.cit.

3. Ibid., para.16.

4. Ibid., para.18.

had to be applied¹. Consideration would also need to be given to the reasonableness of extra expenditure on transport. Much

"will... depend upon the strength of the reasons on which parents' choice is based."²

The grounds on which parental choice of a particular school was considered valid were outlined in the previous section on parental rights. It might be that no objection could be raised to a parent's choice other than that the travelling costs were unreasonable. In such circumstances it might be that parents would wish to accept responsibility for their children's travelling expenses and that LEAs would then acquiesce in their choice of school. Whenever possible this should be made plain to parents beforehand and the Minister would bear it in mind on appeals under Section 55(1) concerning the Authority's duty to provide free transport³.

Authorities had powers under Section 55(2) to assist wholly or in part with travelling expenses where no arrangements existed under 55(1). Parents means could then be taken into account and the Authority might discriminate between pupils. These discretionary powers, the Manual pointed out, are wide and may be compared with powers under Section 81(1) for the payment of children's expenses, whether in maintained or fee-paying schools. Assistance under 55(2) for travel expenses could be combined with help to meet fees under 81(2). The same principles which applied to Section 81 should guide Authorities in using powers under 55(2) as a means of furthering parental choice of school⁴.

That fees for free place pupils at independent schools were paid under Section 9(1) of the 1944 Act was not regarded as a satisfactory statutory position. This Section gave power to LEAs, in accordance with arrangements approved by the Minister, to assist schools not maintained by them. Payment of fees was assistance to parents rather than to the school. Consequently attention was drawn to the need for amending the

1. Manual of Guidance, op.cit., paras. 19 and 20.

2. Ibid., para.22.

3. Ibid., para.26.

4. Ibid., para.27.

1944 Act. It should be made clear when it was the duty of LEAs to pay the tuition fees of children at fee-paying schools, and when they were empowered, as under Section 81, to give assistance to avoid hardship.¹

The 1953 Education Act accomplished the desired clarification. Whereas hardship cases were dealt with as hitherto under Section 81 of the 1944 Act, fees for free places at fee-paying schools were in future paid under the 1953 Act. Section 6(2) of this Act stated LEAs shall pay the whole fees where a pupil fills an LEA place at a direct grant school, but that the whole fees at an independent school be paid only in specific circumstances. These were when:

".. the authority are satisfied that by reason of a shortage of places in schools maintained by them and ... by other LEAs, being schools to which the pupil could be sent with a reasonable convenience, education suitable to the age, abilities and aptitude of the pupil cannot be provided by them for him except at a school not maintained by them or another LEA."²

Circular 268³ explained that Section 6 of the 1953 Act established

"beyond doubt the duty of a local education authority, in certain circumstances, to take up places in direct grant and independent schools ... Many LEAs have found it necessary to do this, and to pay the tuition fees in full, without applying an income scale, because their maintained school provision... is inadequate or does not offer education of the kind needed by a particular pupil. Section 6 is not intended to modify existing practice in any way, but to provide more specific legal authority for it and to make the conditions and limits more precise..."⁴

LEAs were advised that the discharge of their obligations must be in accordance with arrangements approved by the Minister. Where such approval had already been given in the past, there was no need to re-submit proposals.⁵

This remained the situation until 1959. Under Part I of the Local Government Act 1958 the main education grant was superseded by a general grant. It was necessary to issue new Regulations for all main branches of the education service, and Local Authorities were given wider

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1. Reports of the Ministry of Education Sub-Committee of the Local Government Manpower Committee. July 1951. para.15.
 2. Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1953, 6(2)(a)(ii).
 3. Circular 268, 17.8.53.
 4. Ibid., Para. 9.
 5. Ibid., Para.12.

financial discretion. It was stated in Circular 350¹ that LEAs no longer needed to seek the Minister's approval before taking up places at non-maintained schools. The Minister in the Circular gave the general approval required under Section 6(1) of the 1953 Act.

Fees are not the only receipts of direct grant schools from public funds. As their name implies, these schools receive a 'direct grant' from the Minister. Under Section 100 of the 1944 Act, the Minister shall make regulations firstly for payment by him to persons other than LEAs of grants in respect of expenditure incurred or to be incurred for the purposes of educational services provided by them²; secondly for payment by him for the purpose of enabling pupils to take advantage without hardship to themselves or their parents of any educational facilities available to them, of the whole or any part of the fees and expenses payable in respect of children attending schools at which fees are payable³.

Although the Direct Grant Schools Regulations have been amended from time to time since 1945 (in 1951 and 1959)⁴, the conditions attached to the receipt of grant have remained substantially the same. A capitation grant towards current expenditure is paid by the DES for every pupil in the upper school (from age 11 years to under 20 years). This grant has risen from £20 in 1945 to £45 in 1963. In addition, a Sixth Form grant was introduced in 1954, which stood at £66 in 1959 and rose to £84 in 1963. Pupils in the Sixth Form between the ages of 17 and under 20 are eligible for this additional grant, and younger pupils taking in that or the following year at least two 'A' Levels in the General Certificate of Education. It should be noted that the proportion of sixth formers in direct grant schools is higher than in maintained grammar schools - 21.20 per cent against 15.72 per cent in January 1963⁵.

1. Circular 350, 24.3.57, para.7.

2. 1944 Act, Section 100 (1)(b).

3. 1944 Act, Section 100 (1)(c).

4. S.R. & O. 1945 No.636 Part IV. S.I.1951 No.1743. S.I.1959 No.1832.

5. The Direct Grant School. A Memo. prepared by the Direct Grant Committee of the Headmasters' Conference. No date, but probably 1964.

No grant is paid for children in the lower school (preparatory department). Finally, there is provision for grant covering

"any special or experimental work at the school involving extraordinary expenditure, and approved by the Minister."¹

Fees charged by direct grant schools have to be approved by the Minister². The effect of the Ministry's capitation and sixth form grant is to reduce fees below the level they would otherwise have to be to run the schools. That means that parents who send their children to direct grant schools as fee-payers are subsidised by the Ministry's capitation and sixth form grant. Fee-paying parents may apply for remission of fees, on an income scale approved by the Minister, and for those cases where fees are remitted, the Ministry reimburses the school with the difference between the approved fees and the amount actually paid by the parents³. This provision of the Direct Grant Schools Regulations is in accord with Section 100 (1)(c) of the Act referred to above. It means that the Ministry gives this additional help to fee-paying parents with children at direct grant schools on grounds of hardship in much the same way as LEAs may give help to parents whose children have assisted places at independent schools, also on grounds of hardship, under Section 81(b) of the Act.

The Regulations governing all these payments, issued under Section 100 of the Act, lay down certain conditions. These include the appointment of one third of the governors by the LEA or, if the proprietors prefer, the majority of the governors are appointed as representative governors⁴; the school must not be conducted for profit⁵; the submission of plans and estimates of cost to the Minister for his approval before new premises are provided or alterations made to existing ones⁶; and acceptance of arrangements laid down in the Regulations for the admission of pupils into the upper school⁷.

1. S.I.1959, No.1832, para.4(d).

2. Ibid., Part II, para.18.

3. Ibid., Part I, para.4(1)(c) and Part II para.18(2).

4. Ibid., Part II, para.7.

5. Ibid., para.10.

6. Ibid., para. 9(3).

7. Ibid., para.16.

The following are the regulations for admission of pupils: 25 per cent of the previous year's annual intake of pupils have to be given "free places" - full remission of fees to be financed by the LEA, by an endowed foundation or by the Governors of the School. Pupils qualify for free places only if they have at any time been at a grant-aided primary school for at least two years. It was mentioned above that the preparatory departments of direct grant schools (the lower school) are not eligible for grant-aid; consequently pupils in them cannot be considered for free places unless they have received at least two years of their primary education in a state school at an earlier stage.

If an LEA desires to take up places beyond the quota of free places, then the school has to offer up to a maximum of another 25 per cent of the annual intake to the LEA as "reserved places", or more, if the Authority and the Governors agree. Such places are open to pupils irrespective of the school previously attended. For all places taken up by an LEA, free or reserved, the LEA is responsible for the school fees, as was explained earlier. It should be noted that the Regulations do not compel an LEA to take up even the 25 per cent free places, and certainly not the further 25 per cent of reserved places. But if a direct grant school fails to have an arrangement with one or more LEAs to take up the 25 per cent of free places, then the governors are responsible for finding the money to pay fees for pupils given these free places, since the Regulations forbid the payment of fees by parents for one quarter of the intake.

The remaining places, making up the "residuary places", are filled by the governors from among applicants whose parents are prepared to pay fees. The proportion might be 50 per cent of the annual intake (or less) where the LEA takes up reserved places, or up to 75 per cent, if the LEA has no such arrangement with the school. These parents, as was explained above, may apply for remission of fees on an income scale.

It should be said in conclusion of this section that the total result of all these financial arrangements under the Act and relevant Regulations is that the direct grant schools receive approximately

75 per cent of their total current income from public funds. Part III of the thesis will show that before the war some direct grant schools also received public funds towards capital expenditure and that the buildings then constructed with LEA assistance were still in use after the war. It is thus somewhat controversial to suggest that the direct grant schools may properly be treated as part of the private school sector, but the evidence which follows should speak for itself.

Chapter 3

Middlesex as a Local Education Authority

Introductory

The Middlesex County Council was created in 1888 and dissolved in 1965. Education powers were not vested in the County Council until the Technical Education Committee was formed in 1892. After the 1902 Education Act, an Education Committee was formed with responsibility for secondary education (grammar and technical) throughout the County. In addition, the County Council exercised elementary education powers under Part III of the 1902 Act in those parts of the County which were too sparsely populated for the creation of 'Part III Authorities'. The thirteen separate Part III Authorities exercised elementary education powers only in one third of the County's geographical area, within which, however, three-quarters of the County's population lived. The 1944 Act abolished the Part III Authorities and the County Council then became the Local Education Authority for the whole County. But a new two-tier structure was created, involving delegation of powers, which will be described below.

The 1888 Local Government Act, which created the County Council, cut down the old geographic County of Middlesex, which until then extended east along the north bank of the Thames as far as its junction with the Lea Valley¹. The new County, roughly crescent shaped, around North-West London, was largely rural and agricultural, although heavy urban development had already overflowed from inner London into the

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1. For this chapter, and especially for the brief historical account, extensive use has been made of the booklet by Dr. C.E. Gurr, former Chief Education Officer of Middlesex, entitled Primary and Secondary Education in Middlesex 1900-1965, which was published by the Education Committee shortly before the dissolution of the County Council.

immediately adjacent Middlesex boroughs of Acton, Brentford, Tottenham, Willesden, Wood Green and Hornsey.

In the present century the County experienced an accelerated increase in population because of the influx of adults, mainly young and middle-aged. People came from over-crowded London to the new suburban housing estates; from surrounding counties and further afield to new industries which sprang up along the transport routes into London; from the depressed industrial areas of the north to job vacancies that were still increasing in the south. Thus even though the birthrate might not be rising, the number of births rose considerably.

Between 1921 - 1931 population increased by 30%, five times the rate of England and Wales; between 1931 - 1939 by 27%, seven times the rate of England and Wales. By 1950 Middlesex had $2\frac{1}{4}$ million people, compared to approximately 381,000 in 1888.

It has been a major problem for the County to provide local authority services for this population explosion. The fact that different areas, often neighbouring ones, had their population expansion at different periods, has added to the difficulties. In provision of schools, for example, it meant that an older borough like Willesden had all-age elementary schools because intensive school building occurred before the first world war. Neighbouring Wembley had its population expansion in the nineteen twenties and thirties when separate primary and senior schools were being built. Thus the problems of reorganisation into separate primary and secondary schools after 1944 were less acute in the more recently expanded areas.

After the second world war it was the northern-most tip and the western and south-western corners of the County which experienced a considerable population increase, whilst some of the older areas lost population. Naturally new schools had first to be built on the outer fringes.

The Ministry of Education's Evidence to the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London stated that very good work was being done in Middlesex schools, that the general standard was high, and that the LEA had done well to meet all demands for additional school accommoda-

tion during the vast increase in house building both before and since the war¹.

Middlesex was the second largest Local Education Authority in the country. The following table shows the number of children in maintained schools just after the war, in 1958 and in 1963/4.

Children in Middlesex Maintained Schools²

	1946	1958	1963/4
Primary (including Nursery)	168,154	185,008	162,603
Secondary	73,209	115,993	123,409
Total	241,363	301,001	286,011
<u>Number of Schools</u>			
Primary (including Nursery)	555	635	634
Secondary	205	243	232
Unreorganised Primary (including senior pupils)	80	19	

In addition to children in maintained schools, an unknown number of children in the County were in **private schools** - in two boroughs the proportion is known to have been as high as 15% and 20% respectively³.

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1. Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London. Memoranda of Evidence from Government Departments, HMSO, 1959. See Memo. of Evidence from the Ministry of Education, page 22, para. 24.
 2. Source: For 1946 and 1958: Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London. Written Evidence. Vol.II. Middlesex. HMSO, 1962. pages 44/45. For 1963/4: C.E. Gurr, Primary and Secondary Education in Middlesex 1900-65, p.108.
 3. Ealing and Harrow. Source: Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London. Written Evidence from Local Authorities. Vol.II. Middlesex. HMSO, 1962, pages 260 and 333/4.

The social and occupational structure of the population no doubt contributed to this. The distribution pattern of social and occupational groups in the County is similar to that of London and the South East, but the proportion in the higher categories is greater than for England and Wales as a whole.

However, the pattern varies significantly between boroughs according to their residential or industrial development. There is a relatively high proportion of the professional and intermediate categories in Finchley, Harrow, Hendon, Potters Bar, Ruislip/Northwood, Southgate and Twickenham, and a similarly high concentration of partly skilled and unskilled workers in Edmonton, Feltham, Southall, Tottenham, Willesden, Yiewsley and West Drayton. This variation has repercussions in terms of local demand for education, particularly for extended courses and secondary education¹.

The 1951 Census showed that the social class distribution of occupied and retired males aged 15 and over was as follows²:

Social Class: % Distribution
Middlesex and Average England/Wales

	<u>Social Class</u>		
	I&II	III	IV&V
Lowest Middlesex Borough	11.6	49.9	10.1
Highest Middlesex Borough	40.0	64.3	25.8
Middlesex (average for County)	23.5	57.2	19.3
England and Wales (average)	18.0	53.0	29.0

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1. C.E. Gurr, Primary and Secondary Education in Middlesex 1900-65, p.16.
 2. 1951 Census. England and Wales. County Reports: Middlesex. HMSO, 1953, Table 27, p.69.

(a) Schemes of Divisional Administration

In the previous chapter it was stated that Middlesex County Council under Section 6(1) of the 1944 Act had to establish divisional executives and delegate certain functions to them. Even before the Education Bill was introduced into the House of Commons, a Sub-Committee had been formed by the Middlesex Education Committee, which came to be known as the Special Sub-Committee on the Education Act 1944. Its main function was to deal with the establishment of Schemes of Divisional Administration in accordance with the First Schedule of the Act. Two kinds of Divisional Executives were established under schemes. The first were ad hoc bodies composed of representatives of the LEA and of the minor authorities for the area covered, together with other persons of experience in education. Their schemes were made by the County. Middlesex had four Divisional Executives for non-excepted districts. The second were the Divisional Executives for excepted districts, a status which could be claimed by Boroughs and Urban Districts with a population of over 60,000 on 30th June 1939¹. In this case the Borough Councils concerned made, under the Act², their own schemes of Divisional Administration, but had to do so in consultation with the LEA - i.e. the County Council. Middlesex County Council obviously played a major part in working out the schemes, because in all important respects the sixteen excepted districts in Middlesex had virtually identical schemes³.

Finally, apart from four Divisional Executives for non-excepted districts, and sixteen for excepted districts, the County Council also set up two sub-committees for education, which were local sub-committees of the Middlesex Education Committee.

The attached table shows the twenty areas of the County where divisional executives were established and the two where district sub-committees were set up⁴.

1. 1944 Act, First Schedule, Part III. 4(a).

2. Ibid. (5).

3. Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London. Written Evidence from Local Authorities. Vol.II. Middlesex. HMSO, 1962. p.32.

4. See next page.

Table: Divisional Executives established within the County of Middlesex under the 1944 Education Act, and Composition of Divisional Education Committee

	Borough/ District Council Members	Coopted Members	County Council Members	Total
<u>Excepted Districts:</u>				
Acton	18	8	2	28
Brentford & Chiswick	20	-----10-----		30
Ealing	22	8	2	32
Edmonton	18	4	2	24
Enfield	18	7	2	27
Finchley	11	2	2	15
Harrow	20	8	2	30
Hayes & Harlington	24(All)	8	2	34
Heston & Isleworth	36(All)	5	2	43
Hornsey	20	8	2	30
Hendon	20	8	2	30
Southgate	20	8	2	30
Tottenham	20	4	2	26
Twickenham	20	8	2	30
Wembley	20	8	2	30
Willesden	24	4	2	30
<u>Non-Excepted Districts:</u>				
South-West Middlesex:				
Feltham	6	4	8	28
Staines	6			
Sunbury-on-Thames	4			
North-West Middlesex:				
Ruislip-Northwood	7	4	8	29
Uxbridge	7			
Yiewsley & W.Drayton	3			
Southall	14	3	6	23
Wood Green	14	3	6	23
<u>District Sub-Committees:</u>				
Potters Bar	6	4	4	14
Friern Barnet	9	4	4	17

Source: Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London.
Op.cit., pp.32-35.

The 1944 Act laid down certain conditions to be observed in schemes of divisional administration. These included that the power to borrow money and levy a rate was not to be delegated by the LEA to the divisional executive, that the LEA had to approve the divisional executive's estimates and accounts, that the minutes of the divisional executive shall be open to public inspection and that disputes between the LEA and the divisional executive shall be determined by the Minister. All schemes had to be submitted to the Minister for his approval.¹

1. See First Schedule, Part III, (6), (8) and (13).

(b) The County Education Committee and Delegation of Powers

Given, then, that there was a two-tier local government structure for the administration of the education service, it is necessary to show the division of functions between the LEA and the Divisional Executives in the County of Middlesex, and the Committee structure of each¹.

The County Council as LEA delegated most of its duties to the County Education Committee, including the preparation of the annual budget, but with regard to certain functions reserved the right of decision on recommendation of the Education Committee.

The County Education Committee consisted of approximately 60 members; 42 were members of the County Council, 8 were appointed by the County Council from outside their body - 3 of these being teachers. This Committee controlled the work of the Chief Education Officer and his staff.

The County Education Committee in turn set up Sub-Committees to undertake the work of the LEA in particular fields. The Special Sub-Committee on the 1944 Education Act has already been mentioned. An Education Development Sub-Committee of 30 members was in existence from 1945 - 1948 and its order of reference included the formulation and coordination of general educational policy, the preparation of the County Development Plan, and the planning and erection of buildings².

Responsibility for secondary schools was initially given to a Secondary Education Sub-Committee, also of 30 members, but in 1948 this Sub-Committee was amalgamated with that responsible for primary schools, and became the Schools Sub-Committee, which had 23 members. When the Secondary Education Sub-Committee was set up, a statement was included in the minutes which amplified the formal order of reference. Much of the detailed work formerly done by the Higher Education Sub-Committee

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1. The account in this section is based on Written Evidence submitted by Middlesex to the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London (op.cit.), pp.28-35, unless otherwise stated.
 2. EDSC/I/2.7.45. p.1.

would be passed over to the new Divisional Executives. The Sub-Committee would become more and more concerned with matters of policy and content in secondary education.

"Its purpose will be to ensure that there is parity of standard and opportunity in all secondary schools ... and to ensure that schemes are available whereby children from all parts of the County are assured of equal opportunity to obtain that form of secondary education most appropriate to their age, aptitude and ability, whether that opportunity is to be afforded in a Middlesex maintained secondary school or otherwise..."¹

The Schools Sub-Committee included in its Order of Reference the organisation and control of secondary education in day and boarding schools, the award of scholarships and other allowances in respect of pupils at secondary schools, and the functional aspects of school planning. Sources used for this thesis were the Minutes of the Education Development Sub-Committee, the Secondary Education Sub-Committee and the Schools Sub-Committee. The work of other Committees was followed only to trace certain issues, and it is not intended, therefore, to deal with these Committees here. The organisation chart which follows² shows what other main Sub-Committees existed under the County Education Committee.

In the area of each Divisional Executive much the same pattern was repeated. The Borough Councils of the excepted districts set up an Education Committee and a similar series of sub-committees. The Divisional Executives of non-excepted districts were the Education Committee for the area and also had their own sub-committees, in the cases where several district councils were involved. In the others, the Borough Council established an Education Committee in the same way as those in excepted districts did. Except for one chapter of the thesis³, no use has been made of the records of former Divisional Executives.

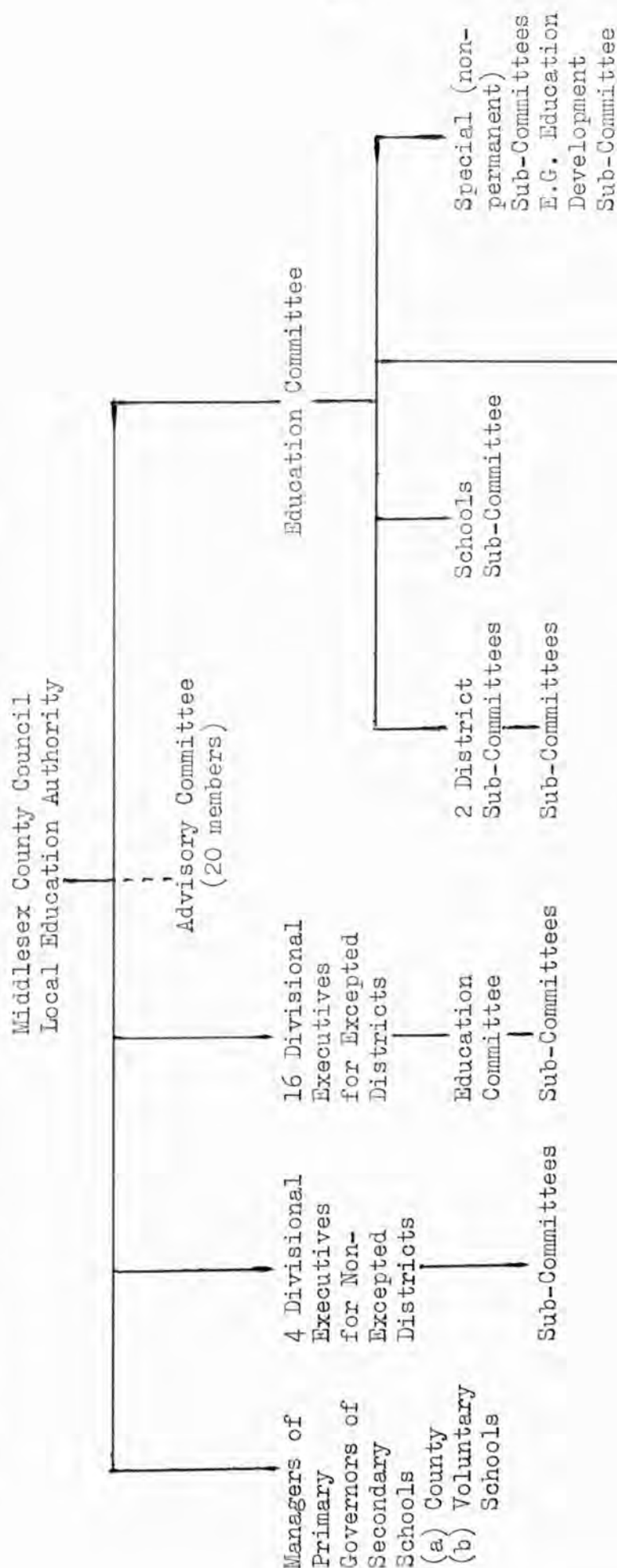
The powers delegated to both types of divisional executives were similar. Especially with regard to the Development Plan, the excepted

1. SESC/I/2.5.45., p.2.

2. See next page.

3. Part II of thesis, chapter 6.

Organisation Chart: Middlesex County Council as a Local Education Authority



Other Sub-Committees, including:
Further Education, Sites and Buildings,
Special Services (e.g. Special Schools),
Finance and General Purposes, County Libraries,
Special - dealing with matters arising from
Schemes of Divisional Administration,
Governing Bodies of LEA Training Colleges.

districts had somewhat greater powers, at least on paper; whereas a non-excepted district made "recommendations" to or "advised" the County Council, an excepted district "submitted" proposals to the County Council.

The Schemes of Divisional Administration delegated functions relating to primary and secondary education. The Schemes set out the functions so delegated and also the limitations of the delegated power. For the purpose of preparing the Development Plan, the Divisional Executive of an excepted district had to consult the County Council and then to prepare and submit its proposals for consideration to the County Council. If the County Council approved them, then the proposals were incorporated in the Development Plan for the County. But the County Council could modify the Divisional Executive's proposals, and in this case the latter had the right to make representations to the Minister¹. Similarly, the Divisional Executive had power to submit proposals to the County Council under Section 13 of the Act for the establishment of new or discontinuance of existing schools. Certain powers were reserved to the County Council. These covered education in boarding schools and arrangements made with proprietors of independent and direct grant schools.

In exercising all its functions, the Divisional Executive was subject not only to the Education Act and the Regulations and directions of the Minister under the Act, but also to Regulations made by the County Council on a whole range of services delegated to the Divisional Executive. The purpose of these Regulations was to secure uniformity of administration throughout the County. Regulations were to be made by the County Council only after consultation with an Advisory Committee of 20 members, half of whom represented the Divisional Executives, the other half the County Council. The fields to be covered by County Council Regulations included allowances made for travelling and maintenance of pupils; transport of pupils to and from school, the admission

1. Two Schemes of Divisional Administration for excepted districts have been examined in detail - for the former Borough of Willesden and the former Borough of Wembley. In most respects they were identical. Both were completed and approved by the Minister during 1945.

of pupils to schools and transfer between schools¹.

Officers, including the Divisional Education Officer, and teachers, were appointed to the service of the County Council. In the filling of teacher vacancies, the County Council had certain rights to secure the appointment of new entrants, to arrange for transfer within the County and to insist on posts being advertised. Other than this teacher appointments were made locally, the Divisional Executive exercising whatever powers articles of government of the school concerned² assigned to the County Council. But the appointment of a secondary headmaster or mistress was made by the County Council on the nomination of a Joint Committee on which the County Council and the Divisional Executive concerned had equal representation.

Finally, all Divisional Executives were subject to the financial control of the County Council, and were obliged to submit their accounts and many other records in connection with their delegated functions to the LEA. Furthermore, the Minister had made it clear in Circular 5³ that correspondence should normally be conducted between the Ministry of Education and the LEA. He was prepared to consider applications from Divisional Executives of Excepted Districts for direct access on matters which under Schemes of Divisional Administration were delegated functions. But on policy, as distinct from day to day administration, correspondence would be conducted with the LEA.

This shows very clearly that broad policy questions were to remain within the purview of the County Council and the Local Education Authority for the whole of the County.

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1. The list is very long. Topics of particular interest for this thesis have been selected as illustrations only.
 2. Middlesex County Council was, in fact, very reluctant to adopt instruments and articles of government for schools because it involved setting up a third administrative structure. However, the Minister insisted that there was a statutory obligation to establish school governors, and in the later fifties the County did so.
 3. Circular 5, 15.9.44. Appendix.

(c) The Elected Members of the County Council and Party Structure

Until after the second world war, Middlesex County Council was Conservative controlled. Party considerations were much less prominent than after the war. After the war party politics penetrated the local government field in many parts of the country, Middlesex among them. Political control of the County Council changed four times as between Conservative and Labour in the twenty years covered by this study.

The first post-war elections were held in 1946 and thereafter all councillors and half the aldermen were subject to re-election every three years. The crucial years from the political point of view were 1946, 1949, 1958 and 1961:

County Council Election	1946	Labour majority
County Council Election	1949	Conservative majority
County Council Election	1958	Labour majority
County Council Election	1961	Conservative majority.

During interviews of former councillors it was ascertained that both the Conservative and Labour Groups on the County Council had a similar group structure. Both appointed Leaders of their Group and both had Whips. Meetings of the whole Group preceded County Council meetings and before important Committees, the members of the party concerned serving on that Committee had a group meeting. Both parties kept minutes of group meetings and probably of group sub-committees as well. Both parties also had an executive or policy-making committee made up of the Chairmen of Council Committees (or the "shadow" chairmen). The CEO from 1945-52, who had joined the Middlesex Education Department in 1919, commented on the fact that after the war there was no longer any real discussion in the sub-committees, because matters were settled in advance within the private party group meetings¹.

It is of interest that both on the Conservative and the Labour side, a mere handful of people became prominent on the County Education Committee. Over the twenty years one person was the outstanding personality

1. Interview: Mr. Salmon.

and spokesman on education for the Conservative and the Labour Group respectively. The Conservative spokesman served on the County Council uninterruptedly from 1941 to 1965; the Labour spokesman from 1935 to 1965. Both these people were able to give their full time to public work. There were, of course, in both parties other councillors who became chairmen of Sub-Committees, even of the Education Committee, during this period. But their influence was not as enduring as of these two.

(d) The Officers of the County Education Committee

Just as a very few elected representatives exercised top-level influence in education over many years, so there were a very few leading officers, with equally long periods of service. During the whole of the County Council's history as an Education Authority, from 1898 to 1965, only four people occupied the post of Chief Officer. The first man served Middlesex education for 30 years; the second for 17 years, the third for 7 years (but he had been an officer of the Middlesex Education Committee for 26 years when he became CEO); the fourth for 13 years (he had been the officer responsible for schools for a few years previously). Similarly, the Deputy Education Officer for the County at the time of its dissolution had served the Middlesex Education Committee for 18 years. Much the same is true of the Divisional Education Officers. Many of the men and a few women who became Divisional Officers or Assistant Divisional Officers after the war were still serving either in the same or in another Middlesex Borough 20 years later.

The Officers had their own machinery of consultation at County level for working out policy suggestions and for dealing with practical problems of administration arising from Committee decisions. There was an Officers' Meeting, where leading County Officers met all Divisional Education Officers regularly for discussion. The Officers' Meeting set up ad hoc or permanent Panels, or small sub-committees, to deal with particular issues. One such Panel dealt with Eleven Plus Selection and Transfer to Secondary Schools. In this work the teachers were intimately involved with the Officers, their representatives meeting the Officer Panel quite frequently.

(e) Middlesex Teachers

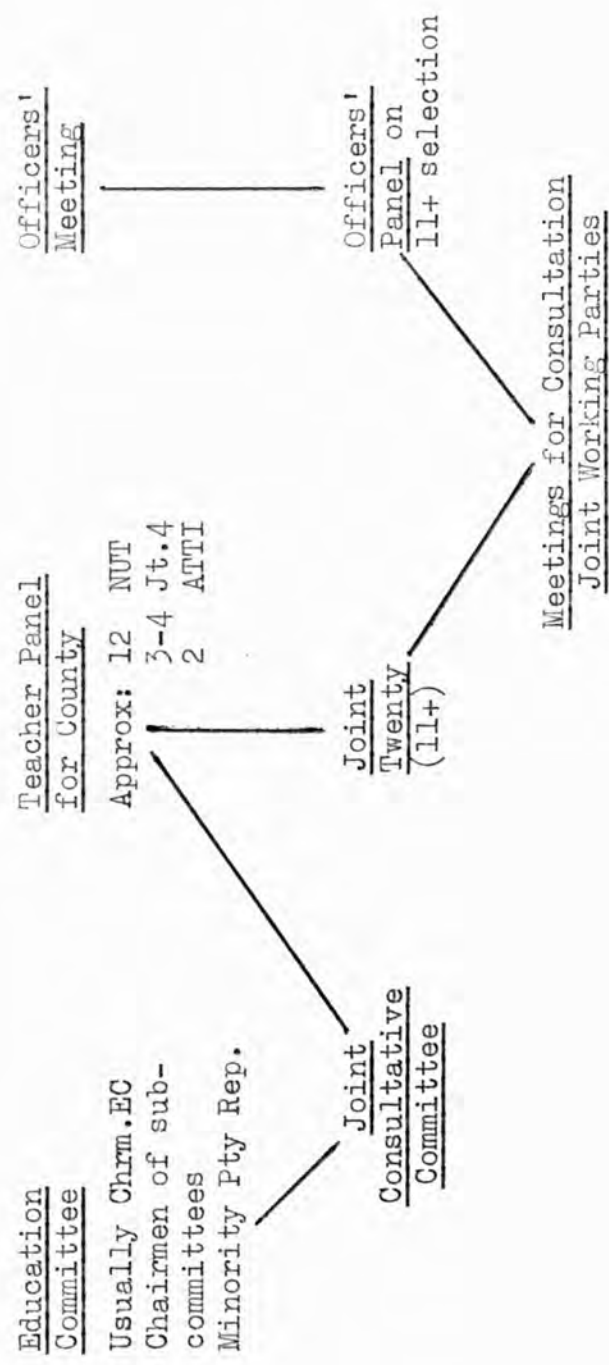
All teachers were appointed by the County Council. The number of teachers employed in the County schools rose from approximately $10\frac{1}{2}$ to $12\frac{1}{2}$ thousand between 1950 and 1964¹. After the war the various teacher organisations linked their branches throughout the County so that they were organisationally equipped to play their part in a representative capacity. The National Union of Teachers formed the Middlesex County Teachers Association, and the four Secondary Associations (mainly grammar school teachers) formed the Middlesex Joint Four Committee. Teacher representatives sat as coopted members both on the County Education Committee and on the Divisional Executives.

A Joint Consultative Committee was established consisting of elected members of the County Education Committee on the one hand and of teacher representatives on the other, meeting approximately once a term. The teachers formed a Panel of members representing the NUT, the Joint 4 and the Association of Teachers in Technical Institutes (ATTI), roughly in proportion to their membership among Middlesex teachers. This County Panel might meet as often as six times a term². It also set up a sub-committee, the Joint Twenty (10 secondary and 10 primary teachers) which was given the specific task of working closely with the County's officers on eleven plus selection and allocation to secondary schools. Teacher representatives from the Joint Twenty had meetings with the Officer Panel responsible for Selection at eleven plus, and from time to time Joint Working Parties were formed. Active teacher representatives gave a tremendous amount of their spare time to this sort of work.

A small diagram³ illustrates the consultative relationship between teacher representatives on the one hand and officers or elected members on the other.

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1. C.E. Gurr, op.cit., p.92.
 2. In addition, some machinery for teacher representation and consultation also existed at the local level.
 3. See next page. Compiled on the basis of information given by a teacher representative of long-standing experience.

Organisation Chart: Consultation between Teachers, Officers and Councillors



(f) Policy-Making

The structure of educational administration in Middlesex was extremely complex. Whilst at County Council level at any given time very few personalities would be involved in initiating policy, these few had always to consider the reactions to actual proposals once the process of consultation began. Often it was a very long process indeed. Reactions from teachers, divisional executives, parents, the Ministry, governors of non-maintained schools, the diocesan authorities might all have to be taken into account.

The County Council as LEA had the ultimate responsibility for over-all policy. But once policy had been decided, its implementation lay primarily with the Divisional Executives and the teachers. Thus the LEA could not afford to ignore the susceptibilities of those who executed policy. Over any issues that were politically controversial, like the comprehensive school, there were always some divisional executives at variance with the County Council, because at any given time the two bodies were controlled by opposite political parties. On the other hand, there were policy issues on which party considerations were of less importance, but in these, too, difficulties arose through the consultative process.

Policy initiatives were usually taken by leading officers in close consultation with committee chairmen, and especially with the Chairman of the Education Committee. Sometimes initiatives were taken from the political side, and officers were then instructed by the Committee to work out new ideas. Important reports by the CEO would be shown to the Education Committee Chairman before presentation to the Committee. Sometimes the Divisional Officers at their own Meetings drew attention to the need for change, and this would set the complex machinery working.

Elected members of both parties spoke highly of their officers, who were not in an easy position given that the County Council saw-sawed between Conservative and Labour. Access to officers was always easy for elected members, even when they were in opposition. Information was obtainable at all times, but an opposition spokesman had to bear in

mind that a copy of the answer to his enquiry would be sent to the Chairman of the relevant Committee. It was considered part of the Officers' job to keep the controlling party informed about the climate of opinion in the minority party.

Representative teachers probably were more influential in direct consultation with officers than when they sat as coopted members on committees, either at County or local level. Those who were interviewed all referred to the difficulty of the teacher representatives on a politically controlled committee, because of their need to remain politically neutral. On the other hand, teacher representation on the Education Committee meant that the teacher organisations were better informed on the County's educational policy than they would have been otherwise. NUT teacher representatives, for example, gave extremely detailed reports at Middlesex County Teachers' Association Council meetings.

PART II

ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS

WITHIN A SELECTIVE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Chapter 4General Secondary Schools Policy of County CouncilIntroductory

Secondary schools policy in Middlesex had three main phases. At no time did the County Council favour the tripartite pattern of organisation, which was supported by the Ministry of Education over many years, and was adopted by a considerable number of Local Authorities in the years following the 1944 Act. It seems likely that Middlesex would have adopted such a pattern but for the fact that the 1946 County Council Elections resulted in a Labour majority.

Each time political control of the County Council changed, the CEO was required to prepare new policy outlines for the Committee's consideration. The first occasion was in 1946, when the Labour-controlled County Council instructed the Chief Officer to base the organisation of secondary education on the comprehensive school. The CEO's previously prepared statement was abandoned and the first draft Development Plan¹, submitted to the Minister in 1948, provided for the ultimate establishment of comprehensive schools throughout the County.

The Conservatives on the County Council originally did not oppose the adoption of the comprehensive school as the unit of school organisation. But by the time they were returned with a majority in 1949, the comprehensive school had become a political issue. The Minister had by then conveyed his objections to the draft Development Plan, with which the Conservative-controlled County Council agreed. A review was begun immediately and the revised Plan² was based on a bipartite pattern of

1. MCC. Dev.Plan 1948.

2. Ibid., 1951.

grammar and modern schools, each with technical facilities. This was submitted to the Minister in 1951, and was approved, subject to certain reservations, in 1952. The 1951 Plan remained the County's Development Plan for the remainder of the period, although it was brought up to date from time to time.

The Conservatives controlled the County Council for nine years, until the 1958 elections resulted in a Labour majority. The Labour Group still favoured the comprehensive principle, but did not revise the Development Plan. It concentrated instead on the abolition of the formal eleven plus and on the development of extended courses in all modern schools. The ultimate aim remained the establishment of a comprehensive system.

In this chapter the adoption of these three approaches to the organisation of secondary education will be examined. Attention is concentrated on the process by which broad policies were formulated rather than how they were implemented. These policy outlines form the necessary background to later chapters, which trace in detail how the Authority tackled the establishment of comprehensive schools in the late forties and how the eleven plus procedure was revised in the late fifties.

(a) The First Development Plan: Labour Policy

On August 3rd, 1944, the Education Bill received the Royal Assent. The man who was to become CEO of Middlesex the following April had listened to many of the Parliamentary debates, and had late in 1944 prepared a document entitled "The Task Before Us".¹ Preparation of the Development Plan for Primary and Secondary Education would be

"one of the biggest and most urgent tasks which lie before us. It involves taking decisions on broad educational issues, e.g. the content and organisation of secondary education, principles of planning, equipment and staffing of different types of schools, the supply of teachers... The part which the Divisional Executives will play in the formulation of the development plan has not yet been determined, but in any case they will have to be consulted in regard to those portions of the plan which affect their areas. ..."

By the summer of 1945 ideas about the organisation of secondary education were being discussed by members of the newly established Educational Development Sub-Committee (EDSC). The Minority Party (at this stage still Labour) submitted a Report on secondary education in July². No copy of this report could be traced, but it certainly advocated either multilateral or comprehensive schools³. Memoranda were also received from the Education Advisory Committee of the Communist Party and National Association of Labour Teachers, stating the case for the multilateral school. The Sub-Committee agreed that proposals for the establishment of multilateral schools should be considered at a joint meeting with the Secondary Education Sub-Committee (SESC). However, such a joint meeting was not held for another year, by which time Labour was in control of the County Council.

Meanwhile the CEO put forward his own ideas in a report on "The Future of Secondary Education in Middlesex in Relation to the Education Act, 1944". It stated that⁴

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1. CEO'S Personal Papers.
 2. EDSC/I/2.7.45, p.19.
 3. Interview: Cr.Mrs. Beech. The then Conservative Chairman of the Education Committee, according to Cr.Mrs. Beech, would have accepted the multilateral, but not the comprehensive school.
 4. EDSC/I/9.11.45, p.40, CEO's Report.

"A scheme for secondary education must envisage a division into secondary grammar schools, secondary technical schools and secondary modern schools..."

The EDSC discussed this Report in November 1945, accepted its general principles and authorised steps to be taken to consult the interested parties, including representative teachers.

This was the nearest Middlesex came to adopting the traditional tripartite structure for secondary education, although segregation of children into grammar, technical and modern schools was to occur only at the age of 13, not at 11. In addition, some experiments in multi-lateralism were envisaged.

Between 11 and 13 all children were to be educated in the modern school, performing the function of a "sifting school". Recruitment to grammar schools at 13 rather than at 11 was thought to be a way round the problems of selection¹. Transfers for incorrectly placed pupils would be easy within the same school².

"The form teachers of parallel forms in the 'sifting' school would meet at frequent intervals under the chairmanship of the head of that school to determine whether any pupils were incorrectly placed, and, if so, to re-arrange them."

Within two years it would be clear which children were suited for a grammar (or a technical) course, and such children would then be transferred from the modern schools.

Under the CEO's scheme, the grammar schools (like the technical and the public schools) would have recruited at 13, involving loss of their junior forms. The CEO argued they would be fully compensated because with

"carefully selected pupils who invariably intend to stay for Vith form work..."

the grammar schools would stand

"a very good opportunity to demonstrate that the authority's own grammar schools can compare favourably with the public schools."

1. Interview: Mr. Salmon. He called the period a "probationary year or two".
2. EDSC/I/9.11.45, p.40, CEO's Report.

In cases where a large grammar school had to perform the sifting process, it should be ensured that all children could complete their course there. This, presumably, would have made the school a multilateral one. Parents would accept the "sifting" concept only if transfers at 13 were considered an improvement. Clearly this was why normally the probationary two years were to be spent in the modern school. Transfer from modern to grammar or technical school would be accepted, but not vice versa.

In view of the shortage of places in junior technical schools consideration might be given

"to having a junior technical course in some existing grammar or modern schools. Interesting forms of multilateralism might be evolved from such experimentation."

These proposals were in due course submitted to representative teachers through the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) machinery. Teachers unanimously thought that secondary schools of all types should have equal status. The idea of the "sifting school" was criticised because it would imply an inferior status for the modern school. A second break at 13 was also not welcomed, except by technical school teachers whose pupils hitherto had been recruited at that age. The multilateral school was opposed, in the main, by grammar school teachers but supported by the majority of modern and primary school teachers on the Teachers' Panel. These teacher reactions, reported to the EDSC shortly after the County Council elections¹, were a fairly accurate forecast of what was to happen later, when teachers expressed their views about the comprehensive school proposals.

The EDSC agreed that the main objective of any scheme for the organisation of secondary education should be parity of status for all secondary schools. But it now also favoured the²

"establishment of comprehensive schools with a slightly higher age of transfer of pupils from the primary education to the secondary education stage³. The CEO was instructed to submit as soon as

1. EDSC/I/29.5.46, p.162, CEO's Report.

2. EDSC/I/29.5.46, p.163.

3. These were early days after the 1944 Act. The Sub-Committee seems not to have realized that the Act stipulated transfer to the secondary stage at the age of eleven.

possible a report showing how such a scheme could be applied in practice and indicating what the minimum size of a multilateral school should be and how existing schools could be grouped for the purpose."

This meant the CEO had to think afresh; his first attempt at defining the Authority's secondary schools policy was no longer acceptable. Within two months, in July 1946, the new marathon report was ready, and was considered by a joint meeting of the EDSC and the SESC. It was entitled "The Future of Secondary Education in Middlesex"¹ and outlined a long-term and a short-term policy. The former was to the effect that

"a system of comprehensive secondary schools, organised in general on a 4, 5 and 6 form-entry, should be planned within the County and that these schools be designated secondary schools with appropriate distinguishing names."

It was realized that shortage of building labour, materials and teachers would delay the establishment of comprehensive schools. Parents were meanwhile to be informed of the County Council's intentions, and, it was hoped, progress would be made in a number of directions in the short-term². These included the use of some existing buildings as comprehensive schools because they were sufficiently large or could be made so by the addition of huts; the grouping of existing schools in some districts; the improvement of modern school premises to give them parity of standards in equipment and staffing with grammar schools, since disparity would prove fatal to the scheme; and the planning of new schools on a sufficiently large scale in areas of new housing development.

The CEO's Report set out the statutory requirements as amplified in Ministry publications³. In the main, the Ministry advocated the tripartite structure. However, emphasis was put by the CEO on those passages in Ministry statements which pointed to the need for free interchange of pupils between the ages of 11 and 13, or even later, and to the possibility of multilateral schools. According to the Ministry, experience did not at present justify very large schools, and if such

1. SESC/5/22.7.46, p.46, CEO's Report.

2. Ibid., p.48.

3. The Ministry of Education publications specifically referred to by the CEO were: Pamphlet No.2 "A Guide to the Educational System of England and Wales"; Circular 73 and Circular 90.

premises were planned, they should be regarded as experimental, capable of modification.

The aim of the secondary stage of education was outlined. It was to prepare pupils for complete living, developing their aptitudes and abilities to make them good individuals and valuable members of the community. They were to be capable of clear thought and rational judgment, fitted and willing for all offices in private and public life. Thus a general cultural and educational core should be given to 16 and no undue specialisation before that.

One section argued the pros and cons of the multilateral principle. On the one hand, the main case against was the size of such schools. In a school of 2,000, the head would be an administrator and would not know his pupils. A school smaller than this would be unable to develop the traditional sixth form. Supporters of multilateral schools argued, on the other hand, that parents would accept them as real secondary schools and there would be no problems of parity of esteem; that transfer between courses would be easy within the same school; that selection for different schools would no longer be necessary; and that a wider range of courses and subjects, and a more abundant social life, could be offered all children.

Stress was placed on the importance of the personal relationship between head and pupils, that schools beyond a certain size would make a satisfactory social and corporate life very difficult of achievement, that care would have to be taken to prevent a lowering of standards in grammar schools, particularly at sixth form level. The sixth form certainly posed a problem. On the basis of existing figures, to have a first year sixth form of 30 pupils would require a multilateral school of 3,000 pupils. The Report was ambiguous on this matter. It rejected large schools, proposing that "both from the educational and social viewpoints", 4, 5 and 6 form-entry comprehensive schools be established. Yet it gave no clear indication how satisfactory sixth form work could be organised in such schools, beyond saying that schools could continue to develop their own individualities by specialisation and that heads of schools should cooperate. Presumably this meant that the sixth form in any given school

would specialise and draw its pupils from a wider catchment area.

After the CEO's Report had been presented to the joint meeting of the two Sub Committees, three formal motions were moved. The least significant dealt with the name of the comprehensive schools. Should they be designated 'public high schools' or 'secondary schools' with appropriate distinguishing names? The Sub-Committee favoured the latter. More important were the questions of the size of the comprehensive schools, and the association of grammar schools with them.

On size, a Labour councillor held that comprehensive schools should be at least 10 form-entry. The Report's recommendation that comprehensive schools should be 4, 5 or 6 form-entry found favour at the meeting, but it was agreed that experiment with larger schools would not be precluded. There were several reasons why the smaller school was favoured. Existing buildings had to be used and these were generally small; there was no clear conviction that a school as large as 10 form-entry was necessary; there was considerable opposition to large schools¹ - fully argued in the CEO's Report.

The CEO's Report was amended at the Sub-Committee stage on one point only: the position of the grammar schools in relation to the proposed comprehensives. A Labour County Councillor expressed disagreement²

"with the suggestion made in paragraph 8(f) of the CEO's Report. He thought the present grammar schools should be integrated with the new secondary school system. Arrangements for 'contracting out' on the part of the grammar schools would defeat the object of the scheme. He moved therefore that paragraph 8(f) be amended to provide that the grammar schools should be identified with the new system from the beginning. The motion was duly seconded and carried."

Three days later, at a Special Meeting, the Education Committee adopted the Report and six days after that the County Council endorsed the Education Committee's recommendations³. The only recorded division of opinion was over the size of the proposed comprehensive schools. The same Labour councillor who had raised this matter at Sub-Committee level,

1. Interview: Cr.Mrs. Beech.

2. SESC/5/22.7.46, p.47.

3. EC/81/25.7.46, pp.155-156 and MCC Repts/1946/31.7.46.

moved an amendment at the Education Committee meeting to the motion that comprehensive schools should be 4, 5 or 6 form-entry:

"That, in regard to long-term policy, proper consideration should be given to the wishes of the Divisional Executives in determining the actual size of secondary schools in particular cases..."

This was lost by 7 to 13 votes, and the original motion was carried.

Thus by the end of July 1946, in the short space of two months, the County Council had adopted a broad policy statement on "The Future Organisation of Secondary Education in Middlesex". Although this policy was initiated by the Labour Group, according to the minutes, there was no Conservative opposition to it at Sub-Committee, Education Committee or County Council meetings. Even when the Divisional Executives came to be consulted, some of which were under Conservative control, it was found that only two did not accept the County Council's policy. These refused to submit comprehensive school proposals for inclusion in the draft Development Plan. The County Council therefore formulated the necessary detailed proposals for their area¹.

Yet when the Conservatives regained control of the County Council only three years later, they formulated quite a different secondary schools policy with equal speed. Within three years the comprehensive school which originally had been regarded as an educational issue had become a political one. One of the main reasons for this was the decision, at Sub Committee level, that the²

"grammar schools should be identified with the new system from the beginning."

Grammar school teachers and parents organisations were prominent among the early opponents of the County Council's comprehensive school policy. Conservative opposition on the County Council began to be noticeable once parent and teacher resistance crystallized around particular comprehensive school proposals.

1. MCC. Dev.Plan, 1948, Introduction, p.vi.

2. SEEC/5/22.7.46, p.47. The importance of this decision, and how it contributed to crystallizing opposition to the comprehensive school, is dealt with fully in Chapter 6.

During interviews some insight was gained into the way the comprehensive school was discussed in the early years following the 1944 Education Act. It has to be remembered that most people knew very little about the comprehensive school at the time, and that the draft Development Plan for Middlesex was not generally available until it was published in 1948.

Repeatedly councillors of both political persuasions as well as teachers said that in 1946 comprehensive schools were not a political issue, but an educational one.

"No one knew much about them then; after all, we had no experience of them in this country."¹

(A leading Conservative County Councillor)

"When the 1944 Act was passed, and then when the Labour Government was in power, the idea of comprehensive education was not a political idea."²

(A primary head teacher and teacher representative on Middlesex Education Committee)

"I don't think that our Divisional Executive in those early years was very interested in the comprehensive issue, or in the non-comprehensive issue... Comprehensive schools were originally an educational idea ... As a teacher, I dreaded the comprehensive school. I was afraid. I felt like other grammar school teachers. Among Labour people some had doubts about the whole business; ... it cut across party politics at the time. I followed loyally the party line. There was a fair majority for it. But many of the industrial people - Trade Union representatives - did not understand the issue. The pressure for comprehensives came from the Chairman of the Education Committee and from the Labour Leader on the County Council."³

(Labour County Alderman)

This last comment from a Labour Alderman who was also a grammar school teacher points to an interesting situation inside the Labour Group, which controlled the County Council at the time. The former Chairman of the Education Committee⁴ said that there were many ideas around in those early days on comprehensive education:

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1. Interview: Cr. Fox.
 2. Interview: Mr. Dove.
 3. Interview: Cr. Holly.
 4. Interview: Cr. Mrs. Beech.

"Some thought that the idea of a comprehensive school should be used only to improve the secondary modern schools, others felt all children should be embraced by it. Yet others thought we should use the comprehensive school to improve the secondary moderns first and extend it to the grammar schools when success had been shown. .. In both parties there were people so appreciative of the values of the grammar school, that they did not want to interfere with them at all. These clashed with those who believed a truly comprehensive school must cover all abilities. The clash of ideas cut across party lines. Many were hesitant to alter the system. Some were hesitant to accept the comprehensive idea as an educational aim."

Both the Chairman and the Labour Leader favoured the association of the grammar schools with comprehensives from the start¹. But clearly there was no unanimity on this, or on any other, aspect of the matter in the Labour Group. An example of Trade Union opposition to the re-organisation of grammar schools came from one Branch of 450 members of the Transport and General Workers Union, which unanimously passed a resolution and sent it to the Middlesex Education Committee².

"We.. do hereby most vigorously protest against the plan put forward by the Middlesex County Education Committee, .. In particular do we protest against the scheme for changing existing Grammar Schools into Comprehensive Schools. We earnestly request that when the Middlesex plan is placed before the Minister of Education, he will seriously consider modification of the same so that existing Grammar Schools in Middlesex may retain their present status. We .. request that our local Grammar School, ... may retain its present rank. Many children of Trade Unionists, have passed and many are at present passing through this school. We feel that a School such as this, which has served all classes faithfully, for nearly 40 years, should be allowed to retain the dignity, and rank, which it has held for so long in the locality."

The arrangement proposed in the CEO's Report that grammar schools might 'contract out' of comprehensive schemes was most likely the CEO's own idea. In view of the fluid state of opinion in the Labour Group, the CEO may have thought his view would carry the day. In the event, it proved unacceptable to the Sub-Committee. The CEO certainly did not

1. Interviews: Cr. Mrs. Beech and Cr. Oak.

2. EDSC/III/23.10.47, p.163.

recollect that the grammar schools were to be associated with comprehensives. Speaking of the early comprehensive schemes which took shape in 1947-48, he said¹:

"The idea was to get an area where no competing grammar school existed, otherwise parents would mostly choose the grammar school."

Bearing in mind that his earlier Report had suggested recruitment to 3 types of school at 13, it is entirely credible that he should have wanted to preserve the traditional grammar school.

Given this position, it is of interest that one of the primary school teacher representatives should recollect having been the person who challenged the CEO's Report on this particular point. The Joint Meeting of the EDSC and the SESC on 22nd July 1946 at which the CEO's Report was discussed was the first he attended as a coopted teacher representative, and he had a vivid memory of it².

"I seem to remember that the scheme put forward the suggestion that all children from the primary schools should go to the common school, then I believe called high school. All except those selected for grammar school. So selection would continue. I was a new boy and had heard about the common school. I wrote out my ideas of what I would like to see. I would have liked to abolish selection, all children to go to the same school ... all to wear the same uniform. Then there would be no more prestige battles. Children would sort themselves out... Then I asked an innocent question: I thought the scheme excellent but why did they want to leave the grammar school stream out of this school? Grammar school children could still take their exams, still have the best teaching available, but would also make some facilities available for children who did not get into grammar school through selection. There was a deadly hush. One or two Labour people cottoned on. Then I think they altered their idea. Very soon after that the word 'comprehensive' became a dirty word."

It took nearly a year before opposition from grammar school teachers and parents to the Middlesex scheme for comprehensive schools became vocal. Most opponents pleaded that the policy should be experimental in the first instance. As a matter of fact, the CEO stated he had made the same plea³. Meanwhile the Middlesex County Teachers' Association

1. Interview: Mr. Salmon.
 2. Interview: Mr. Dove.
 3. Interview: Mr. Salmon.

(MCTA - roof organisation of NUT branches in Middlesex), which was in favour of the policy, held a Conference as early as October 1946. Sir Fred Clarke of the Institute of Education spoke on "The Common School" and a leading grammar school headmaster and past-President of the NUT on "The Next Five Years in Middlesex"¹. This headmaster played a leading part in the County in propagating the advantages of the comprehensive school. In the early stages when people had the most nebulous ideas about the comprehensive school, he wrote to one teacher (perhaps also to others) seeking his attitude "to a system of education whereby all children would go to the same school after the primary school", and asking how he would set about achieving such a system. For several evenings this teacher sat down and wrote out his ideas. Perhaps it was in this way that various teachers helped shaping the ideas of the headmaster concerned². Thus not all grammar school teachers were against the County Council's policy. But it so happened that this headmaster was a known Communist, a fact to which reference was made later in letters to the press when anti-comprehensive feelings ran high³.

During 1947 the MCTA urged its local branches to hold meetings in support of the Middlesex Plan⁴. One such meeting was held in South West Middlesex and reported in the Middlesex Chronicle⁵. At this both sides of the case were stated. Mr. R. Morley, M.A., M.P., an ex-President of the NUT, favoured the Middlesex experiment, wishing it every possible success. A growing number of educationalists, he said, did not believe in the tripartite structure because they rejected the idea that 3 different types of children existed.

"It was argued that a comprehensive school would give all the children the same status in the eyes of the general public and that the children would not be judged by the school they came from, but on their record. This, it was believed, would have the effect of promoting social solidarity. The children would all mix together, and cooperation in after years would be very considerably intensified. ... There was only one danger that he saw - that the very clever child might not be given so much attention as was received at present in grammar schools. He thought this could be overcome with proper organisation and care..."

1. 916/1/16.9.46.

2. Interview: Mr. Dove.

3. See Chapter 6, page 249.

4. 916/1/9.6.47.

5. 27.6.47. The quoted extracts are from this issue of the Middlesex Chronicle.

The headmaster of School A, who was also a teacher representative on the Middlesex Education Committee and held an O.B.E., argued in support of the tripartite grouping.

"It was odd that just at the moment when grammar schools were at the height of their fame they should be scrapped in favour of something that had never been tried... An experiment involving the lives and careers of hundreds of youngsters was being embarked on without any adequate precedent. It could be shown that in America there was thorough dissatisfaction with the results of the system there. He believed it was unwise to abandon the tripartite system which was admittedly good. ... this plunge was a gigantic application of the principle of trial and error..."

The activities and views of MCTA on the comprehensive school during 1948 are discussed more fully later, in Chapter 6. But the NUT membership was drawn mainly from among primary and secondary modern school teachers. The majority of the grammar school teachers belonged to one of the following: the Association of Head Masters, the Association of Head Mistresses, the Assistant Masters Association and the Association of Assistant Mistresses. These Associations were linked through the Joint Four (Joint Committee of the Four Secondary Associations in Middlesex), and in 1947 represented over 1,000 grammar school teachers in the County. A Memorandum was submitted by them to the Education Committee in which certain objections were raised against the proposed system of comprehensive schools. This Memorandum said¹

"Special precautions will be needed if it is desired to prevent a lowering of the standards of scholarship which have been reached by painstaking efforts and by gradual stages in the grammar schools, particularly at Sixth Form level."

Whilst recognising that general policy had to be made by the Education Committee and then implemented by teachers to the best of their ability, it was nevertheless the duty of teachers to point out the dangers and defects of the proposed new plan. Their main objection was to small comprehensive schools, in which it would be impossible to offer good staff and opportunities to children of grammar school ability. At least 10 form-entry would be required, so that 3 grammar streams could be

1. EDSC/III/26.6.47, p.115.

recruited. The Joint Four were also critical of the proposal to transfer sixth formers between schools; each school's sixth form specialising in a particular field. This would destroy the educationally valuable cross-fertilisation and would also create staff difficulties. An appeal was made that the comprehensive school policy be experimental.

The Sub-Committee received and considered this Memorandum. On the same date its attention was drawn to the Ministry of Education Circular No.144, which stated that comprehensive schools should be 10 or 11 form-entry, for 1,500 to 1,700 pupils. A six form-entry school would be the¹

"absolute minimum below which the application of the multilateral principle would become unreal."

The Sub-Committee considered this in relation to its draft Development Plan for 4, 5 and 6 form-entry comprehensive schools. It decided to report to the Education Committee it had no further recommendation². Clearly, then, it was not prepared to meet the Joint Four criticisms about standards of work at sixth form level by accepting the idea of larger comprehensive schools.

Old Boys' and Girls' Associations and Parent and Staff Associations also protested against the Middlesex Plan. Twenty-eight of these organisations connected with 19 schools formed the Committee of Middlesex Secondary Schools Organisations (i.e. Grammar Schools) at a general delegate meeting in July 1947. When their Committee met again in January 1948, it declared its opposition³:

"We believe that by constituting the comprehensive school as the only future form of Secondary Education ... the Middlesex County Council .. are failing to carry out the Provisions of the Education Act of 1944, particularly as regards the variety of education enjoined in Section 8, and by frustrating the statutory obligations of parents towards their children's education which the Act has established in Section 36.

We contend that in any case the Comprehensive School System as

1. EDSC/III/26.6.47, p.114.

2. Ibid., p.115.

3. Committee of Middlesex Secondary Schools Organisations. "A Report of Evidence and Opinion in Opposition to the Development Plan of the Middlesex County Council", 1948. (Available DES Library).

envisaged for Middlesex will not remedy the defects of the Tripartite System, and the inherent disadvantages of the comprehensive schools far outweigh their alleged social and administrative advantages."

The objections listed in their Report were submitted to the Minister of Education under Section 11(4) of the 1944 Act. Unselected entry to secondary schools at the age of 11 was held to be a dangerous experiment because it imperilled the proven grammar school training for able pupils entering the professions and universities. Further, pupils at comprehensive schools would be at a disadvantage when competing with pupils from other counties, or even within the County in the earlier stage of the plan. It was claimed that the majority of teachers opposed the plan and that without their cooperation it would not succeed¹.

The preferred alternative was modified selection at 11 with further "Transfer and regrading of controlled numbers up to, but not later than, age 13."

Modern schools should develop on their own lines, but be given real parity of esteem with grammar schools. Their buildings and amenities should be raised to that of the grammar schools. The grammar schools should not merely be preserved but extended. After all, at present some 3,000 grammar school pupils attended out-County schools at an annual cost of £100,000.

Finally, the LEA was accused of having "acted unreasonably" under Section 68 of the 1944 Act in not ascertaining parents wishes. The explanatory meetings which had been held for parents had not ascertained parents' wishes, but merely attempted to gain support for the comprehensive plan.

"The Middlesex Education Committee appear to have tried to adopt the tactics of a secret society in putting through their proposals, under the thin cloak of meetings ... for free discussion, for, at numerous such meetings it has been stated by their representatives that the Draft Development Plan was drawn up on a basis of comprehensive schools because this was the unanimous decision of all parties at the County Council meeting concerned. No doubt other objectors will have made clear to the Ministry the falseness of this contention..."

1. If judged by the statements of MCTA and the Joint Four, this claim was not true of Middlesex teachers in general, but it was true of grammar school teachers.

At the end of this Report a table was given entitled "Teachers Vote in Referendum on Plan". This showed 108 teachers For, 295 Against the Plan, 25 Abstaining. No information was given where and when this referendum was held, but the figures are identical to those quoted in the Surrey Comet¹. There the figures were said to be the result of a referendum among teachers in one Borough, which was the area of the most pro-tripartite Divisional Executive in the County.

According to the Times Educational Supplement², this protest from the Committee of Middlesex Secondary Schools Organizations was the first large-scale organised one against comprehensive schools pressed at Ministerial level. The Committee claimed to speak on behalf of 10,000 affiliated members objecting to unselective entry to comprehensive schools.

Some grammar school parents' associations also sent their individual protests to the Middlesex Education Committee. One of these claimed that the Middlesex Plan failed to comply with Section 8 of the 1944 Act which stipulated that the LEA must provide a variety of education, and that parents' obligations and rights under Section 36 and 76 had been disregarded. It was feared that grammar school teachers would leave the County. An appeal was made that existing grammar schools be allowed to retain their status and that³

"if considered necessary, a small scale experiment be made with the Comprehensive School in urban areas where County grammar schools are not now available."

Another simply disapproved of any form of comprehensive secondary education in its area and "strongly urged the Middlesex County Council to reconsider their proposals..."⁴. An Old Pupils Association pleaded for experiment before the wholesale adoption of the comprehensive system by the Education Committee⁵.

1. 17.7.48.
2. 7.8.48.
3. EDSC/III/23.10.47, p.164.
4. EDSC/IV/20.11.47, p.7.
5. Ibid.

It is not surprising that many of those identified with the grammar schools should have opposed the County Plan. Probably every grammar school in the County felt itself involved in the proposed change. A considerable body of evidence to this effect was found.

Three grammar schools in one part of the County were mentioned in a Booklet by a Senior Master at one of them as being earmarked to become comprehensive schools as a result of the¹

"radical changes made in secondary education by the 1944 Education Act, together with the declared policy of the Middlesex Education Committee to conduct secondary education in common schools..."

Another School History² related how Middlesex Education Committee

"was considering the School as one of the centres round which it proposes to organise what had become known as 'comprehensive' schools... Sweeping changes in the membership of the Governing Body by the use of the County Council's power of appointment had made substantial support on the Board likely..."

Whether on account of the "sweeping changes in the membership" or for some other reason, it is a fact that the Governors approved on 21st March 1947 the following resolution³:

"That the Governors desire to assure the Middlesex County Council that, if it is found necessary for the success of their overall Development Plan that the present character of ... School [A] should be changed to that of a Comprehensive School, then they are willing that such a change should take place.

This is said in the knowledge

- (a) that the present pupils would not suffer by the change,
- (b) that future pupils would come from a much wider range of children than the present selective principles permit, thereby giving to such pupils that parity of opportunity that they would otherwise fail to receive."⁴

1. The precise reference is not quoted as this would identify the schools.

2. This extract is from the History of School A.

3. EDSC/III/24.4.47, p.36.

4. Another Board of Governors of a grammar school had adopted a resolution on 17th March, 1947 (EDSC/III/24.4.47, p.36):

"That application be made to the Minister of Education for the ... School to become a voluntary (controlled) School.

That the County Education Committee be informed that the Governors agree to the organisation of the ... School as a 5 form-entry comprehensive school in accordance with the ... Development Plan."

A primary head teacher who for many years was Secretary of the MCTA stated that School A was considered by progressive people in the MCTA to be on an ideal site for a comprehensive, as it shared the large site with two other schools¹. He had been invited by the headmaster to address the parents of School A on the comprehensive school, and was surprised when the first speaker introduced a resolution to the effect that the parents opposed the comprehensive school. He added:

"Naturally the parents of these selected children thought their boys were better off in a grammar school than a comprehensive one."

The headmaster of School A was the one who advocated the tripartite system at the NUT public meeting to which reference was made above. In fact this School's Old Boys' Association was deeply involved in the anti-comprehensive campaign. The School History relates how

"...By March 1947, a mass of opinion had formed among Old ... [Boys] which was extremely suspicious of the County plans in general and hostile to changes at ... [School A] in particular. The Head Master and a very big majority of the Staff were of the same mind, but their freedom of action was compromised by their constitutional relationship to the County Council as their employer...

"The Committee of the Old [Boys'] Association considered the position in general and ... summoned what became a monster meeting... the main committee sponsored the election there and then of a special 'School status committee' to devise ways and means of promoting public knowledge and support and of constitutional opposition to the nature and extent of the Middlesex proposals in general and the proposal to disturb ... [School A] in particular. Governors, parents, Middlesex County Council and Ministry were duly contacted and other Old Boys' and Parents' organisations in the County were given a bold lead... Efforts throughout the County were² coordinated and an Old [Boy] of the School status committee, D.S.C.,

1. Interview: Mr. Dove.

2. The old boy D.S.C. here referred to is the same man who is now Honorary Secretary of the National Education Association, founded on 24th October 1965 at School A in Middlesex, by the opponents of the present Government's comprehensive schools policy, to "safeguard parents' freedom of choice in secondary schooling". The Times (27.10.65) stated that the formation of NEA was the idea of Mr. D.C., "an industrial consultant in London, who is Chairman of the Old ... [Boys] Grammar Schools Committee." It is interesting that fierce opposition to the comprehensive school came from the same quarter in 1947/8 and again twenty years later. A circular letter dated 4.11.65. from the National Education Association explained that the "accident" of School A being involved "so prominently in the founding effort is merely an historical one. As co-founders with others of the Middlesex Grammarians

who had shown great initiative and resource so far, was elected chairman of a small working committee representing the many bodies who had agreed to cooperate for the preservation of those educational facilities, aims and ideals which had become identified with a grammar school education and which they believed the proposals would vitally injure. An interview at the Ministry of Education was sought and granted and on December 10th, 1948, a deputation from the working committee and another from the Old Boys' Association School status committee attended and presented each its separate and closely related case. If their current efforts were not enough, the possibility of legal action was to be considered.

There can be no doubt whatever that the ... agitation was very broadly based among the Old Boys and that it had a strong influence, directly and indirectly, on the outcome. It may well have preserved us as a grammar school. A bye-product of the County-wide effort was the forming of a Federation of Middlesex Old Grammarians' Associations, of which the Old Boys' Association was numerically the strongest member. To look on at the rallying of generations of Old Boys to the defence of their *Alma Mater* was a moving experience. Among the many who took part a flood of loyalty swept aside all political and other differences, producing a most impressive and unshakable unity."

By the time that concrete proposals for the first comprehensive schools were put forward in 1948, one of which would have incorporated an existing grammar school, the opposition to the Middlesex Plan was already vocal. The climate was ripe for "the balloon to go up", as one Education Officer put it. Yet when this did happen in South West Middlesex over the proposal for Keats Grammar School, it seems to have taken almost everyone by surprise¹. That was, perhaps, a measure of the inexperience of both officers and councillors in planning and implementing secondary re-organisation in those early days after the 1944 Act.

Meanwhile the completed draft Development Plan had been forwarded to the Minister in April 1948. The early comprehensive experiments were separately approved that summer, but the Minister's reply covering the

Footnote continued from page 112:

Association were in a leading position in 1947 in the widely supported popular movement which secured the defeat of the then Middlesex County Plan for universal comprehensive schools. Experience gained then enabled us simply to act as the catalyst in the present national situation..."

1. See Chapter 6, especially pages 254-266.

whole Development Plan was not received until January 1949¹. Two things were immediately clear. First of all the County's proposals for secondary education had been the subject of much controversy and had aroused widespread opposition - indeed, probably more so than any other Development Plan. In fact, the CEO had already told an NUT audience that they would not be surprised that most of the 37 objections received by the Minister related to the Council's Plan for the organisation of secondary education². Secondly, the Minister was highly critical of the small size of the proposed comprehensive schools, and elaborated the difficulties this would lead to in organising satisfactory sixth form courses. Consequently he asked the Authority to think again, meanwhile gaining experience of the three experimental comprehensive schools which he had already sanctioned.

The Minister found it difficult to follow "the processes of thought" by which the Authority had arrived at the conclusion that small comprehensive schools would constitute the best form of provision. It seemed to be based on two propositions:

First, that to provide different kinds of secondary education in different schools was to introduce specialisation at too early an age;

Second, that the multilateral form of organisation necessitated impossibly large schools if they were to offer all the requisite facilities at sixth form level.

On the first proposition, the Minister agreed that secondary education must be a general one, but denied that specialisation characterised the education in the three types of school to which the Authority objected. The tripartite pattern simply derived from

"the conception that all children are not alike, either in their aptitudes or in their standards of ability. No two single children indeed are precisely alike. But, in view of the limitations as to staffing and other facilities... those who

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1. SchsSC/2/20.1.49, p.19-20. The part of the Minister's letter dealing with secondary schools was published in full in the Times Educational Supplement, 19.2.49.
 2. "Secondary Education in Middlesex", Text of lecture given by CEO to MCTA, 13.11.48. CEO's Personal Papers.

have the responsibility for providing facilities for education must base their planning and their provision on the conception that there are broad groups of children who can suitably be handled together, and who ... would be likely to be suited by different forms and standards of even a general education. The logical and usual expression of this is in the system of separate schools... The system of multilateral schools is the expression of a further conception, namely that children of all kinds, whatever their special needs within broad groups, should nevertheless lead together a common school life."

As regards the second proposition, the Minister stated he could not share the LEA's expectation that the problem of sixth form provision in small comprehensives could be solved by each school's sixth form developing its own specialism. There would be difficulty in recruiting teachers suited to grammar school work for schools where their special subject was not taken beyond fifth form level. Further, in schools of 4 and 5 form-entry it was unlikely that there would be sufficient children to ensure that sixth form work could be developed to any appreciable extent, and extensive transfers at the age of 15 or 16 between schools would be involved. Circular 144 had stated the view that a comprehensive school should in size match the multilateral school. Middlesex, however, had proposed only four 10 form-entry schools throughout the County.

It may be that the Labour Group now regretted its insistence on small-sized comprehensives, a view which had been challenged by some of its own members. At any rate the Sub-Committee decided that the Minister's letter should be circulated to members of the Education Committee and the County Council, and that the CEO should make a report on the issues raised¹. Possibly action was delayed because the Education Committee was at this time involved in taking legal advice on the matter of parental choice in the catchment areas of the three experimental comprehensive schools, where the County Council intended to abolish the eleven plus examination. Then the matter was taken out of the hands of the Labour Group by the electorate, who returned a Conservative majority.

1. SchsSC/2/20.1.49, p.19-20.

(b) The Revised Development Plan: Conservative Policy

It is always difficult to discover on what issue an election is won or lost. Some of the people interviewed held that the comprehensive school issue contributed to Labour's defeat in the 1949 Middlesex County Council elections, but former Labour councillors denied this, putting their defeat down to the national swing.

The comprehensive school was certainly made one of the issues in the campaign. The Conservative Group Leader answered questions about the comprehensive school at a press conference¹:

"We have regarded it as an experiment of which we are by no means convinced. On the other hand, we are by no means an obstructive party, and are prepared to acquiesce in three schools, experimentally ... and we should oppose any extension of that number until we know the result of those three."

Two weeks later the Labour Group Leader replied to this statement. The Conservatives²

"had agreed to the experiment, ...

No one had come forward with an alternative idea to get rid of the eleven plus examination complex which determined whether a child was going to a grammar or a modern school. Ours was a genuine attempt to solve a very difficult problem. We intend to go ahead, within the limitations imposed on us by the Minister to do all we can to prove the value of the comprehensive school. If it is successful it will set the pace for education in the future."

By 1949 the comprehensive school must have been anathema to many members of the newly elected Conservative County Council Group. In Chapter 6 a detailed account is given of the struggle for existence as a comprehensive school of one of the three experimental schools which had been launched shortly before, and which was subjected to considerable pressures from the Conservative-controlled County Council³. The County Councillor for the area who had been elected as a Ratepayer candidate in 1946 but who claimed to be⁴

"distinctly Conservative - although pinkish..."

1. Barnet Press, 19.3.49.

2. Ibid., 2.4.49.

3. See especially Chapter 6, pages 267-313.

4. Letter from Cr. Hare to author, dated 21.2.67.

was told by the Conservative Party before the 1949 County Council Elections that

"I must serve as Conservative or they would fight me. This I refused to do and ..[x].. took my place."

It was probably no coincidence that this Councillor had, as Chairman of the local Education Committee, cooperated with the Education Committee Labour Chairman in getting one of the experimental comprehensive schools started.

Further, the new Schools Sub-Committee Chairman said¹

"I was not anti-comprehensive. But I was told I could be Chairman of the Schools Sub-Committee if I did not pursue the comprehensive schools any further. By that time comprehensive schools were disliked and Conservative policy was strongly against them."

The new Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee said²:

"I'm not opposed to comprehensive schools as an experiment. I opposed them as a matter of party politics... because the Socialists initiated them..."

In any case, at the first meeting of the Schools Sub-Committee after the County Council elections the CEO was instructed to report on revision of the Development Plan for Secondary Education³

"on the basis of separate modern, technical and grammar schools; also on the basis of modern-technical and grammar-technical schools, new schools normally not to exceed five-form entry."

A special sub-committee was set up to consider this matter and then report to the full Schools Sub-Committee.

At the same first meeting of the Schools Sub-Committee, alterations in the plans for at least nine secondary schools were accepted, to bring them into conformity with the proposal that schools should not exceed 5 form-entry in size. The new Conservative Chairman of the Education Committee had instructed the CEO to bring to the attention of the Sub-Committee school buildings commenced or planned⁴.

The Schools Sub-Committee Chairman recalled that it was⁵

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1. Interview: Cr.Mrs. Deer.
 2. Interview: Cr. Fox.
 3. SchsSC/3/19.5.49, p.24.
 4. Ibid., p.25-6.
 5. Interview: Cr.Mrs. Deer.

"necessary immediately to go into action about schools which were to be comprehensive. We met in the Vice-Chairman's room at the Guildhall; the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee, the CEO and the Officer in charge of schools, the County Architect, the Middlesex HMI, and myself. Plans for schools in the planning or early building stage were spread out on the table. Instructions were given to change these schools."

This strongly suggests that the initiative for these changes came from leading members of the Conservative Group. Labour spokesmen¹ were convinced that Conservatives proposed a policy of small schools because these could not be turned into comprehensives.

However, it was alternatively suggested that the initiative might have come from the officers. The Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee, in whose room - according to the preceding account - the small meeting with the officers had taken place, claimed to have no fixed views about the size of schools. He was surprised that his Party had reduced the planned size of certain schools immediately after the County Council elections².

"Did we really do that? May be the architect wanted a change. He had drawn the previous plans.. under the Socialists, may be under instructions, and did not agree with them."

A senior officer made it quite clear that the³

"plans for the early comprehensives were put together in a rush against officer advice. ... Conservative councillors may have thought a small school could not be made into a comprehensive, but 4 form-entry was quite big enough - it would grow into a school of 800 children."

So at least this officer was personally opposed to large schools.

It may be concluded that the initiative to change school plans probably came from the political side, but that officers cooperated willingly with the elected representatives. In any case, the Education Committee was soon to approve the action of its Sub-Committee on this matter and also the instruction to the CEO to report on the revision of the Development Plan⁴. The CEO's revised policy recommended a bi-lateral

1. Interviews: Cr.Mrs. Beech and Cr. Oak.

2. Interview: Cr. Fox.

3. Interview: Miss Trout.

4. EC/90/13.6.49, p.135.

instead of a comprehensive system. Dates were fixed for speeding the new policy document through all the Committee stages before the end of July¹. The small sub-committee met first, then the Schools Sub-Committee, which reported its recommendations to the Education Committee.

Having considered the Minister's letter on the Development Plan, the Sub-Committee stated that it shared the doubts expressed by him²

"as to the possibility of maintaining the academic standards which have been achieved by the grammar schools in comprehensive schools of the size contemplated in the Development Plan and has doubts also as to the wisdom of destroying the well established system of grammar schools and of embarking upon a complete reorganisation of secondary schools in the County on the basis of a system which so far as this country is concerned has no wide practical experience behind it. Moreover, it is evident that these doubts are shared by a large number of teachers and parents."

The Committee could not accept 10 form-entry schools, which was the size the Minister approved for comprehensives. Such large schools were objected to on account of difficulties connected with the educational organisation of the school, the acquisition of adequate sites and the concentration of large numbers of children. Normally secondary schools should be no larger than 5 form-entry.

It was thought that at eleven children could be broadly classified on grounds of intellectual ability as suitable for an academic course in a grammar school or for a non-academic course in a modern school. But because certain aptitudes and abilities are insufficiently marked at the age of eleven, this was too early an age for a decision about children's suitability for certain types of technical education. Consequently all secondary schools should be concerned with the provision of technical education.

The conclusions reached by the Schools Sub-Committee, after considering the CEO's lengthy Report on "The Organisation of Secondary Education", were summed up as follows³:

1. SchsSC/3/23.6.49, p.57.
2. EC/91/20.7.49, p.62.
3. Ibid.

- "(a) That the present system of allocation at eleven plus is probably as far as it is reasonable to go in differentiating children on their transition from the primary to the secondary stage. This ... classifies children as suitable for a grammar school course or for a modern school course.
- (b) That in both grammar and modern schools it will generally be necessary to make some form of technical provision ...
- (c) That an organisation should be created whereby the children are kept under constant review, particularly in the early years of the secondary stage, so that transfer can be effected between school and school without difficulty."

The development would be gradual, and the immediate abolition of existing technical schools was not contemplated. The dangers of large-scale experimentation would be avoided and flexibility retained. Not every grammar school would have to have a stipulated form of technical provision, nor should the development of some along wholly academic lines be precluded.

The recommendation, then, was that the Report of the CEO for the Revision of the Development Plan be approved in principle, and that the Divisional Executives be asked to review sections of the Plan relating to secondary education in their area in accordance with the revised policy. When this was proposed at the Education Committee meeting, a Labour councillor moved an amendment

"That the County Council adheres to its previous decision in the matter of the organisation of secondary education as outlined in the Development Plan except in so far as it may be necessary to amend the size of the schools in such Plan."

The amendment was lost by 13 to 29 votes, and the original motion then carried 20 to 14¹.

Finally a further attempt was made by the Labour Group at the County Council meeting to uphold the first Development Plan, modifying it in regard to the size of comprehensive schools. This was defeated by 25 to 49 votes². The revised policy was accepted.

Thus the County Council within two months acquired a new secondary schools policy based on a system of selection at 11 for either a grammar

1. EC/91/20.7.49, pp.63-64.

2. MCC Repts/1949. Proceedings of meeting. 27.7.49.

or a modern school, both to offer scope for the development of technical abilities. The CEO's lengthy report replaced the previous policy statement in the 1951 Development Plan¹. It was approximately twice the length, opening with an outline of the Authority's statutory duties, followed by a long historical section reviewing the origins of various forms of post-primary education, covering the 1870, 1902 and 1944 Acts, and the Hadow, Spens and Norwood Reports. The Ministry on the one hand prescribed no set pattern for secondary education, but on the other consistently spoke

"in terms of three types of secondary education, grammar, technical and modern, which could be provided apart from each other in separate schools or in combinations of two or three types in one school."

Diversity within schools, both grammar and modern, was discussed next, followed by the procedure for the allocation of pupils to the right form of secondary education.

"The major problem of selection is to decide at what point to apply a cut-off and by implication to assert that those pupils above are suitable for a grammar school type of education and those below are not."

"Various figures on a percentage basis have been advanced both nationally and locally, the justification for them is, however, questionable. The real picture is probably that the grammar schools, having dealt with a certain percentage, have evolved a technique and standard of attainment suited to that percentage and to go much outside this percentage would require some considerable change in the organisation. Thus to maintain the grammar school generally in the present form, the existing percentage should be maintained."

This would mean a

"broad division of approximately 20 percent of children² to grammar schools and 80 percent .. to modern schools."

The technical schools were discussed in great detail and the CEO argued against separate technical schools. As parents of children who pass the selective tests were likely to opt for grammar schools, it was

1. MCC: Dev.Plan 1951. Appendix III, pp.121-9.

2. The Middlesex percentage was in fact always higher than this. See next chapter.

held that separate technical schools would be deprived of entrants who could develop technical skills at the highest level. If grammar schools were inadequately provided with technical facilities, then few of the intellectual elite would develop in a technical direction.

"It is suggested, therefore, that the desirability of establishing separate technical schools to cater for the age range 11-18 should be called in question, as their contribution to the National Education System has not yet been established even in theory."

The need for more technical facilities would be met by the development of technical education in grammar and modern schools.

"The sciences and technical skills requiring a high degree of correlation and mental ability would be the sphere of the grammar school, whereas in the modern schools the emphasis on the technical side would be on craftsmanship."

This was evidently to involve more laboratories and workshops - but grammar schools would not require a large number of workshops for engineering and building etc., whereas modern schools would.

In the early stages transfer between schools should be easy. Schools should also work together as units and courses at advanced levels should be available to children within such a large unit even if complete transfer from school to school was undesirable for the older children. Within such a unit it should be possible to offer every child the course most suited to it - both by personal choice and by educability.

Some words of wisdom concluded the section on size and sex of schools. Grammar schools should be 3 or 4 form-entry. For mixed ones 4 form-entry was best. As regards modern schools, these should in general be 4 form-entry.

"... although there is much to be said for co-education - and reasonable opportunity for co-education should be offered - a mixed modern school presents many difficulties of organisation and it will probably be better, in general, to organise schools as single-sex schools."

What were the reactions in the County to the revised policy? Before the Education Committee and the County Council accepted this policy, a Conference of representatives from Divisional Executives was held¹.

1. MCC Repts/1949. Supplement to the Report of the Education Committee for MCC Meeting 27.7.49. pp.243/4.

Twelve areas expressed agreement, 5 preferred the comprehensive system, whereas 3 areas wanted the tripartite structure. Many representatives wanted more time before the revised policy was formally adopted, but this was not granted because it was¹

"a matter of some urgency that a decision should now be taken in regard to the organisation of secondary education because of its effect on the planning of a number of new secondary schools which are included as urgent projects in the 1949 programme. Moreover, ... the proposals are so flexible that there is reasonable scope for individual initiative in several directions."

Various teacher organisations also asked that consideration of the CEO's Report be deferred in order to enable teachers to submit their views on the new plan. The Education Committee simply resolved to receive these letters². In consequence, the Middlesex Secondary Teachers' Electoral Colleges and the MCTA protested against lack of consultation over the Revised Development Plan³, and the Middlesex Secondary School Association expressed "grave concern at the proposal ... to abolish the Secondary Technical Schools."⁴

The MCTA's Secretary had prepared early in July comments⁵ on the CEO's Report for discussion among NUT branches. The revised scheme would involve considerable public expenditure on technical facilities in grammar and modern schools. It was hoped this would not detrimentally affect the needs of the primary schools. With regard to the eleven plus, it was agreed that it was difficult to select pupils from the border-zone and in view of this the pass mark should be fixed in such a way as to permit more border-line pupils to go to grammar school. In fact, primary teachers had hoped to be freed from the demands of the selective eleven plus and parents objected to the future of their children depending on one examination. The examination was to continue under the revised Plan. Moreover, as the second choice of a technical school at thirteen plus would

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1. MCC Repts/1949. Supplement to the Report of the Education Committee for MCC Meeting 27.7.49. p.245.
 2. EC/91/20.7.49, p.61.
 3. SchsSC/3/22.9.49, p.102.
 4. SchsSC/4/22.12.49, p.66.
 5. 916/1/13.7.49.

disappear the eleven plus would finally decide the child's future education.

At a later meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee¹ teachers expressed concern that under the Plan grammar school provision was to be made for only 20 percent of children and at the same time the technical schools were to disappear. The Chairman of the Education Committee assured teachers that there was no intention to decrease the number of grammar school places and that existing technical schools would be maintained until grammar and modern schools could cope with technical courses. A senior officer added that 20 per cent had been quoted for grammar school provision as this was the highest national figure, but it was approximate and fluid. Middlesex should certainly have a higher percentage.

No teacher association protested against the Revised Development Plan in the way in which the grammar school teachers through the Joint Four had done against the first Plan. Nor did parents associations do so. The only overt opposition came from Divisional Executives which continued to favour a comprehensive secondary school system. Six refused to submit proposals for their area based on the new policy, so in these cases the County Education Committee's proposals were incorporated in the Plan instead².

Once the detailed proposals from the Divisional Executives had been incorporated in the Revised Plan, it was ready for forwarding to the Minister. At this stage Labour County Councillors registered their disapproval but they were heavily outnumbered, and in January 1951 the County Council decided by 65 to 29 that the Revised Development Plan be submitted to the Minister³. This was done in March. It was then under consideration for over a year.

The approval of the Minister of Education was received in July 1952, subject to certain reservations. These related mainly to the arrangements

1. JCC/11.1.50, p.137.

2. SchsSC/5/20.7.50, p.73 and SchsSC/7/28.6.51, p.37.

3. MCC/183/31.1.51.

(Minutes of County Council)

the LMA proposed for pupils whose gifts were in the technical field. The Minister remained¹

"of the opinion that the balance of advantage lies in the provision of separate secondary technical schools providing courses closely associated with a field of industry or professional employment at any rate for a minority of able pupils from 11 - 18 ..."

At the same time, the Minister did not want to stand in the way of worthwhile experiment.

"..on the understanding that, in the selected secondary grammar schools in particular, the provision to be made... will provide the same opportunities for the pupils to proceed to advanced studies as would be provided in a secondary technical school, the Minister will be ready to sanction at the appropriate time experiments on the lines suggested in the Plan."

It was, however, added that grammar schools in which technical courses were to be provided should be at least 4 form-entry, in order to avoid extravagance of staffing and equipment. The Authority's hope to develop a regional organisation of secondary technical schools was welcomed.

From the letter it is clear that in the early fifties the Minister of Education was as much in favour of the tripartite structure for secondary education as he had been in the late forties. Yet both the original and the revised Development Plan departed from this structure. The comprehensive school idea was put forward by leading members of the Labour Group as the basis for secondary organisation. The initiative had come from the Labour councillors, and officers had had to draft a policy statement with which they were not in personal sympathy.

The initiative to change the Development Plan also came from elected members. Leading Conservative councillors immediately after the election instructed their officers to revise the secondary schools policy. The instruction was²

"to prepare a report .. on the basis of separate modern, technical and grammar schools; also on the basis of modern-technical and grammar-technical schools.."

1. SchsSC/8/2.10.52, p.72.

2. EC/91/20.7.49, p.61.

it may well be asked why the latter rather than the former basic found favour. This was because the architect of the policy was most probably the leading officer who three years later became CEO, rather than any leading member of the Conservative Group. This at least was what several people stated in interviews in regard to the authorship of the new policy.

The Chairman of the Schools Sub-Committee, without hesitation, said¹:

"The 1949 Policy Statement was Dr. G's. It was very imaginative. It would have been rather tiresome just to go back to tripartism. In the train on the way to a Conference, the CEO pulled a type-script out of his briefcase written by Dr. G., and asked my comments on the draft. I found it excellent..."

Asked whether the Conservative Group would have favoured a tripartite system if that had been proposed by the officers:

"A lot of people are willing to be led, especially by a good officer. They would easily have accepted a tripartite system as, for example, Kent did, with separate technical schools. But Dr.G. suggested this alternative."

A Senior Officer confirmed that²

"The idea of having grammar and modern schools each with technical facilities was Dr. G's. The Ministry was pressing the tripartite system and few had the courage to go ahead with ideas other than tripartite ones at that time."

The previous (Labour) Chairman of the Education Committee said³

"The 1949 policy was Dr. G's. I believe he had held those ideas for a long time. But he also did not want education policy to swing each time political control changed. So he tried to develop a policy which met both points of view to some extent. We felt that the policy he proposed was better than we could have expected."

One Divisional Education Officer by implication claimed co-authorship. He had always believed that academic education should not be separated from technical education and the grammar school in his Division was one of the first to be properly equipped with science and workshop facilities. Asked whether this idea was not the same as the 1949 policy of which Dr. G. was the author, he replied⁴

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1. Interview: Cr.Mrs. Deer.
 2. Interview: Miss Trout.
 3. Interview: Cr.Mrs. Beech.
 4. Interview: Mr. Pike.

"Well, yes, we were good friends. He and I discussed it. He had a way of challenging you, not letting you know he agreed with you, to clarify his own mind and strengthen his conviction. So I put this view of mine to him."

The Conservative Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee who succeeded to the Chairmanship later in 1949, insisted that the 1949 policy was his idea¹

"G. wasn't then CEO. It was my idea. We had to do something about the technical schools anyway. Many were out of date, many in technical colleges where we needed the places for adults, and in any case many more children needed the opportunity of getting a technical education. G. was a very good officer. Policy would sometimes be his, sometimes mine."

The impression was gained that here the wish was father of the thought. This man became Chairman for the first time in 1949, and he "did not know much about education but was willing to learn."² It seems unlikely, therefore, that he was the ideas-man at such an early stage of his long period of office. That the Divisional Officer may have influenced Dr.G. is entirely credible, since he was one of the very experienced senior men in the County. The conclusion is drawn, therefore, that the secondary schools policy based on grammar-technical and modern-technical schools originated from the officers, and that the Conservative Group was willing to accept it because its main spokesmen on education were not doctrinal adherents of the tripartite pattern.

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1. Interview: Cr.Fox.
 2. Interview: Miss Trout.

(c) The Third Phase: Emergence of a Comprehensive System?

In 1958 political control of the County Council changed once again. The County's system of secondary schools was by this time well established, and considerable efforts had been made in the fifties to improve the procedure by which children were selected for grammar schools. This is dealt with in the next chapter, which clearly shows that parents and teachers alike continued to regard a grammar school education as superior, and that parity of prestige between grammar and modern schools was not achieved.

It is not possible in this study to evaluate how far the Development Plan policy in the secondary field had been implemented during the nine years of Conservative control of the County Council. Newly built secondary schools were well equipped irrespective of whether they were grammar or modern schools. But naturally in the first decade or so after the war most new school building had to concentrate on the areas of expanding population. Some of the old schools in the inner urban areas were extremely hampered by their premises in developing more advanced secondary work.

In the middle fifties, the MCTA had conducted a survey of secondary schools in the County¹. 104 out of 153 secondary modern heads had returned the questionnaire; 42 out of 54 grammar school heads had also done so. Both types of school heads complained that lack of space and equipment prevented the development of advanced courses. The survey concluded that secondary modern heads had taken the initiative wherever possible to develop their work; the older areas could make little headway, whereas some schools further out were more lavishly accommodated than some grammar schools. But the secondary modern school was not being developed according to a 'County Plan'. Many of the grammar schools were

1. 916/17/20.2.56. The questionnaire had been circulated to secondary schools in the autumn term 1954, and a small Sub-Committee had prepared the Report on the Survey.

providing courses beyond the traditional curriculum, but none could be regarded as grammar-technical schools. New courses were not the result of County planning. This report laid the basis for a Conference organised by the MCTA in 1956 on "Developments in Secondary Education".¹

What, then, was Labour's policy when it won the 1958 County Council elections? The Labour Group still adhered to the comprehensive principle, but inherited a bipartite system of mainly small schools. Furthermore, it soon became apparent that the Minister would not allow under the existing Development Plan the abolition of selection at the age of eleven. Nor would he approve any proposals to incorporate an existing grammar school in a comprehensive unit. Short of re-drafting the whole Development Plan for a third time, the Labour Group had to formulate policy within its framework. Re-drafting would have taken up much time, with no guarantee of ultimate Ministerial approval and meanwhile school building projects would have been delayed.

After the 1946 and the 1949 County Council elections, Labour and Conservatives respectively had pushed through their secondary schools policy with all speed between May and July. In 1958, the Labour Group was not immediately ready with its policy. The Labour Chairman of the Education Committee said²

"We had learned from experience that the Divisional Executives had to be consulted. We could not rush things. There had been changes in control twice and the children and schools should not be made the plaything of the parties."

In fact the ball was set rolling by the Conservative spokesman on education, probably while the Labour Group was still working out its policy. Rather surprisingly, he moved a motion, in October 1958, advocating a tripartite structure³. The attack on comprehensive schools was, of course, less surprising, given the previous Conservative attitude on this matter⁴:

1. 916/17/1.12.56.

2. Interview: Cr. Mrs. Beech.

3. Interviewed 7 years afterwards, on 4.8.65, Cr. Fox could not remember having put down this motion. He most probably regarded it as part of the party political battle.

4. MCC Repts/1958. Agenda for County Council Meeting 29.10.58, p.2, item 7.

"That this County Council is of the opinion that Secondary Education in Middlesex should be provided in separate Grammar, Modern and Technical Schools, and that to introduce a system of comprehensive schools would be fatal to good education and be in the worst interests of the children for whom the County Council has to provide education facilities."

One of the Labour Councillors moved an amendment to the effect that all after the word "Middlesex" should be deleted and the following added¹:

"...should be such as will implement the provisions of Section 8 of the Education Act 1944...." (Section 8(1)(b) was quoted in full).
 "The County Council is of the opinion that, in order to fulfil this duty the present selection at the age of eleven plus should be abolished as soon as alternative arrangements can be made."

The amendment was carried 53-40, and the substantive motion then agreed.

But the 'abolition' of the eleven plus was only one part of Labour's policy. It was concerned with the procedure of selection, not with the type of schools to which children were allocated. Two weeks later, in November, a Labour motion was put before the Education Committee². The Labour Group had decided to concentrate on the improvement of the accommodation and equipment of secondary modern schools in order that all of them could offer 5 year courses leading to O Level General Certificate of Education (GCE), and selected ones could in addition offer appropriate courses to the age of 18 years. Staffing improvements were to be made as soon as possible. The Divisional Executives and teachers were to be consulted on the implementation of these proposals.

It was suggested by the mover that everyone could accept the need for improvements in the secondary modern schools and in some grammar schools. A spokesman for the minority party expressed broad agreement with the development of all secondary schools, but wondered about the selection of some modern schools for 7 year courses. This would harm the other modern schools, he thought.

The motion was carried without a division at the meeting of the Education Committee, but when the proposals for improving the modern

1. MCC Repts/1958. Summary of Proceedings of Meeting 29.10.58, p.37.

2. EC/111/10.11.58, p.108.

schools were considered by the County Council, Conservatives opposed that section of the Education Committee Report, mustering 49 votes against 58¹. Asked about his opposition to the improvement of the modern schools, the Conservative spokesman who had seconded the amendment to the Report, said²

"that must have been pure party politics, I may not have voted."

The Labour Chairman commented³

"The fact that Conservatives supported our 1958 policy in the Education Committee but opposed it in Council may have been tactics. Sometimes it is considered sufficient to have one public debate for the sake of publicity."

Yet the explanation may have been a different one. Labour had not abandoned the idea of ultimately introducing a comprehensive system. But evidently some Divisional Executives were more interested in the immediate than the ultimate future. And this may have aroused Conservative opposition. Some Labour-controlled Divisional Executives used the opportunity to put forward immediately comprehensive schemes of reorganisation for their area. One Divisional Executive, the first to put forward a scheme, proposed 5 groups of schools, to be run as comprehensive units. This reached the Schools Sub-Committee⁴ even before the motion for the improvement of the modern schools was endorsed by the County Council. And this was only the beginning. The following month two more Divisional Executives put forward comprehensive proposals to the Education Committee⁵. Clearly there was some anxiety that the grammar schools were again threatened now that Labour controlled the County Council. One protest was received from a grammar school and one from an Urban District Council; a Branch of the Electrical Trades Union, on the other hand, congratulated the Middlesex County Council on its new policy⁶. Later the Middlesex Joint Four expressed criticism of the proposals of

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1. MCC Repts/1958. Summary of Proceedings of CC Mtg. 26.11.58, p.40-41.
 2. Interview: Cr. Fox.
 3. Interview: Cr. Mrs. Beech.
 4. SchsSC/19/18.11.58, p.29.
 5. SchsSC/19/16.12.58, p.54.
 6. Ibid., p.66., and 20.1.59, p.93.

Divisional Executives favouring comprehensive schemes, although declaring itself in agreement with the general County proposals¹.

Meanwhile, a small Development Sub-Committee had been set up to consider the proposals from Divisional Executives forwarded as a result of the motion to improve secondary education. The Sub-Committee expressed itself in sympathy with the long-term plans of the three Divisional Executives which had put forward comprehensive schemes. But difficulties were anticipated over the existence of well established grammar schools, the position of teaching staffs, and the necessity of grouping some schools to form sizeable units².

By March, the Conservative spokesman on the Education Committee said³

"... it had been understood that the County Council intended to retain the grammar schools and to raise the standard of the secondary modern schools, but it now appeared that the intention was to do away with grammar schools..."

in three areas. Most modern schools in the County were now offering O Level courses:

"Changes must be made since education could never stand still, but the best, i.e. the grammar schools, should be retained, and the level of the remainder should be raised."

The Minister clearly had come to the same conclusion. Some projects put forward by the LEA in its building programme were part of comprehensive reorganisation schemes. The Minister required the Authority⁴

"To give particulars of the proposed pattern of secondary education of which the schools concerned will form a part."

Consequently the Schools Sub-Committee decided that in submitting to the Ministry revised Development Plan proposals it would be advisable to make clear the organisation of secondary education proposed⁵.

"In reaching this decision it was borne in mind that the present Development Plan is based on a system of secondary education which implies some form of selection at the age of eleven plus.

1. SchsSC/21/23.6.59, p.44.
2. EC/112/9.2.59, p.2.
3. Ibid., 9.3.59, p.31.
4. SchsSC/20/17.2.59, p.21.
5. EC/112/9.3.59, p.55.

Any scheme which proposes to do away with selection will, therefore, be regarded by the Ministry of Education as a fundamental change in the Authority's Development Plan, and will inevitably result in a period of delay while the Ministry considers all the implications of such a policy. Urgent building projects for secondary schools in the areas concerned will thus be jeopardised unless the short-term as well as the long-term position is clear."

A few months later, the Minister¹

"intimated in an informal discussion with the Chairman of the County Council and the Chairman of the Education Committee that any proposal which involved the discontinuance of an existing grammar school was unlikely to be approved for inclusion of the 1960/62 Building Programme."

The Labour Chairman of the Education Committee explained that during their second term of office the Ministry, in the end²

"left the County Council free .. to decide what happened inside a particular school building, provided grammar schools were not touched."

In September 1959, the Leader of the Middlesex County Council, at a press conference, summarised his Party's policy. The statement of policy adopted in November 1958 was quoted³:

"That immediate steps be taken to bring the accommodation and equipment of all County secondary schools to a standard which will provide adequate facilities for an appropriate range of subjects to be offered at the Ordinary Level of the GCE; and in addition, appropriate courses for pupils up to the age of 18 years."

Grammar schools would continue to provide their traditional education facilities. The aim was to bring all secondary schools to an equally high standard.

"All secondary schools are to have improved equipment and much needed laboratories, workrooms, libraries and gymnasias. This requires a vast programme of building new schools and bringing existing schools up to modern requirements. When this is achieved there will no longer be any need for selection. Children will be able to go to the school best suited to their particular ability and aptitude. Parents will be able to make their choice of school, not by examination but by consultation."

1. EC/112/13.7.59, p.153.

2. Interview: Cr. Mrs. Beech.

3. MCC: Duplicated Press Statement. 14.9.59.

(d) Summing Up

Middlesex had a selective secondary schools system over the twenty years following the 1944 Act. Changes in political control in 1946 and 1947 meant changes in plans for secondary education. The Labour Party favoured comprehensive schools, but held power for too short a period to do much about implementing its ideas. Officers were instructed to revise the Development Plan as soon as the Conservatives won the 1949 County Council elections. That Conservatives would enjoy nine uninterrupted years of control was not then known. The officers had to reckon with the possibility of another change of control three years later. Thus in formulating a policy acceptable to the anti-comprehensive Conservatives, the officers will have had one eye on the pro-comprehensive Labour councillors. The officers did not relish the thought of secondary schools policy being subject to political see-sawing. Thus there emerged the idea of a system of grammar and modern schools, in each of which pupils were to be given opportunities to develop abilities in the technical field. The eleven plus was accepted for dividing children into those suited for an academic type course on the one hand and a modern type course on the other.

What were the main differences between the policy foundations of the first and the second Development Plan? Basically the Labour Plan rejected that 'academic' type children should be educated separately. All children should go to the same school, within which their different abilities should be given full scope. The Conservatives, on the other hand, believed in separate grammar schools for the abler children, modern schools for the remainder.

The Conservatives, therefore, had to justify selection which Labour ultimately hoped to abolish. Their 1949 policy statement argued at length that the eleven plus examination could satisfactorily be used to allocate children to one of the two types of school, but that it was no guide to suitability for a technical education. By contrast, Labour's 1946 policy statement was almost completely silent on selection at eleven.

On the question of size of school, the two parties were closer to each other. Neither favoured large schools in which the head would become an administrator and in which the school's corporate life would suffer. Thus Labour's policy favoured 4 to 6 form-entry schools, Conservatives 3 to 5 form-entry. Yet when it became clear that the Minister would not allow small comprehensive schools, Labour's dislike of large schools gave way to its support for comprehensives. At this point, then, the two parties again came to differ. By insisting on small schools during their nine years of office, the Conservatives made it doubly difficult to change the school system to a comprehensive one at a later date.

Both Plans met some opposition from the lower-tier authorities, the Divisional Executives. These were required to formulate their detailed school proposals to fit in first with a comprehensive then with a grammar-modern structure. Only two Conservative-controlled Executives refused to submit comprehensive proposals, whereas six Labour-controlled ones refused to abandon their comprehensive proposals under the Conservative administration. But apart from this apparently greater opposition to the Conservative policy, the really vocal opposition was against Labour policy.

In Middlesex, the comprehensive school became a political issue. The leading Conservative spokesman on education on the Middlesex County Council claimed not to be against the comprehensive school, but to have opposed it simply because Labour had proposed it. According to Sir Graham Savage, architect of the London School Plan of 1947, this was what happened in the LCC area. After extensive teacher consultations, he claimed, the comprehensive school then became a political matter. He added:

" 'Damn it, I wish education could be left out of politics. The Conservatives were all against it. They opposed it simply because the other side proposed it. .. Mind you, I can see the position where the Labour group would have opposed it, if it had come from the Conservative side'." ¹

1. The Times, 2.4.65. Article No.2 in a Series on Comprehensive Schools by Special Correspondent. "How It All Began - in a Chance Visit to America".

Does this mean that secondary schools policy after the war simply became the victim of the party political system? One theory holds quite simply that the duty of an opposition is to oppose. Even so, no wise opposition opposes the government on all issues, irrespective of their merits.

On the comprehensive school issue the post-war situation was most confused. The Labour Party's policy nationally was pro-comprehensive but the Minister of Education under a Labour Government defended the tripartite structure. At least one Conservative LEA (Southend) was pro-comprehensive. Some Labour supporters in Middlesex and elsewhere defended the grammar schools. Nor did Middlesex Conservative councillors immediately oppose Labour's comprehensive policy. In fact, political opposition occurred only after grammar school teachers and parents had criticised the comprehensive school policy and when concrete proposals for comprehensive schools included an existing grammar school.

It is, of course, possible that Conservatives simply saw in this issue one which was politically useful to them. But in view of the esteem in which the grammar schools were held, and their position in the school hierarchy, it seems more likely that defence of the grammar schools also appealed to Conservatives on the merits of the case. Everyone knew that the grammar school gave children a better opportunity, despite the talk about parity of status for different types of schools. As the years passed, the social idealism of the war was wearing thin. True, all children were by the 1944 Act guaranteed a free secondary education. But parents were no longer so sure whether they wanted their child to go to the same school as the dustman's. So the dustman's child would go to the modern school, unless, of course, it was seen to be academically clever by the age of eleven.

Middlesex Conservatives, then, opposed the comprehensive school, but they did not adopt the tripartite policy favoured by Labour and Conservative Ministers alike. The fact that the Minister had just rejected Labour's Development Plan when the Conservatives won the County Council elections was a feather in their cap. Yet their own Plan did not win wholehearted favour in ministerial eyes. But at least this

time the Plan was approved, although reservations were expressed about the Authority's attitude to technical education. Individual projects, especially for technical facilities in grammar schools, would be systematically considered when put forward, with a view to allowing experiment. Whilst Labour's overall Plan had been referred back, some comprehensive schools had actually been approved, also in order to allow experiment.

Had Labour retained control of the County Council in 1949, in all probability the Plan would simply have been revised by proposing large instead of small comprehensive schools. As the Minister's main objection had been that sixth form work would suffer in small comprehensive schools, he would have found it difficult to reject such a revised Plan. Indeed, he approved the LCC Plan in 1950.

But by 1958, when Labour was again in control, the situation had changed. The Conservative Plan had been approved and working for a number of years. A return to the all-out comprehensive aim would have antagonised several Divisional Executives and in addition was politically unacceptable to the Minister at that time. It was soon made clear that the Minister would not countenance the abolition of any existing grammar school, and thus the abolition of selection was also out of the question. The Labour Group therefore approached their second term of office pragmatically, not without difficulty in their own ranks. Some Divisional Executives were determined that comprehensive schemes of reorganisation be submitted to the Minister, only to have them rejected. The policy pursued by the County Council was improvement of secondary modern schools so that in due course selection would be a less competitive and anxiety creating process for children and parents. It was the case that the establishment of five-year and in some modern schools of seven-year courses made the secondary modern schools more attractive to parents who had higher education and other career ambitions for their children¹.

1. By 1965, 15 modern schools out of a total of 160 were designated as 7-year schools. Between 1958-64 the number of children in modern schools gaining O Level passes rose more than 4 times. See Dr.C.E. Gurr, Primary & Secondary Education in Middlesex, 1900-65, pp.67-8.

Given, then, that secondary schools policy in Middlesex was contentious in the party-political sense, how did this affect the role of the officers? One senior officer¹ held that councillors do not originate ideas, but that these come from officers. Most councillors knew very little about education. The Chairman and the Committee then criticised the officers' ideas. This officer agreed, however, that if the Party in control had an education policy of its own, officers may have to put forward ideas and proposals against their own better judgment. This was more likely to happen under Labour than Conservative control.

Whether that is necessarily so is a matter for further investigation. But in the field of secondary schools policy, it certainly was the case in Middlesex. The first policy statement, when the Conservatives still controlled the County Council, reflected officer views, but these views were not acceptable once a Labour majority had been gained.

Whilst the officers loyally served the Labour-controlled Council, most of them were not in sympathy with the comprehensive school policy. The CEO pleaded with the Labour Education Chairman to experiment before committing the LEA to an all-out comprehensive policy². On the other hand, officers probably dislike putting proposals into their reports only to have them rejected by the Committee. So a good officer will sound out the Committee Chairman to find out what ideas and proposals are likely to be acceptable to the controlling group. In the process he may also influence that group's thinking. The CEO certainly "sounded out" the Labour Chairman when the first Development Plan was being prepared³. Even so, the CEO had his proposal that grammar schools might opt out of comprehensive schemes rejected by the Schools Sub-Committee.

It was also the case that when the Conservative Party returned with a majority in 1949, the officers' influence on policy was again greater. Whereas the comprehensive policy was definitely councillor initiated, the grammar-technical, modern-technical policy was officer

1. Interview: Miss Trout.
 2. Interview: Mr. Salmon.
 3. Interview: Cr. Mrs. Beech.

initiated. The CEO in proposing that policy rightly hoped that it would find acceptance among Conservatives without unduly offending the susceptibilities of Labour. Yet it remains true that in 1949 a different Chief Officer might have meant a different policy, whereas this was not the case in 1946.

Finally, it should be noted that the number of people involved in policy-making are extremely few. Over some twenty years there were probably not more than half a dozen councillors in each party who had much direct say in policy, and in both parties there was one person who probably had the main say over the whole period. On the officer side the same is true. There were only two Chief Education Officers, and a very few senior officers, who were involved in policy decisions. The CEO and his staff, however, were in regular contact with their Divisional Officers, all of them with more knowledge about education than the majority of councillors would possess. The influence of these Divisional Officers on certain policy issues will become more apparent in later sections of the thesis.

Chapter 5The Grammar Schools and Eleven Plus SelectionIntroductory

Whatever the ultimate policy of the County Council on secondary organisation, throughout the years 1944-1964 a selective schools system existed. The LEA therefore had to use some method of deciding the type of secondary school to which children would be transferred on leaving the primary school at the age of eleven.

Selection at eleven years of age was, in effect, selection for a grammar school place. As the grammar schools had superior prestige in parents' eyes, entry to grammar school meant success in a competitive process. The children not considered suitable for such a place were usually sent to the nearest secondary modern school as there were very few technical schools in Middlesex. The procedure by which children were selected for and allocated to grammar schools will be described in this chapter, and also how and why that procedure was changed over the years.

Clearly the number and proportion of children selected for grammar school courses does not depend on the process by which they are chosen. Essentially these depend on the relationship between demographic trends and grammar school provision. At any particular moment of time, these are the result of historical events. But policy decisions can and do change the future number and proportion of children who will be selected for grammar school places. Tables will be given showing the proportion of eleven-year olds placed in grammar schools over the years, and how unevenly grammar school provision was distributed over the County.

Both the question of the right proportion and the maldistribution of grammar school places became critical points in educational administration. There were two main reasons for this.

One was that teachers and councillors were vitally interested in the opportunities open to children for a grammar school education. The high prestige of the grammar schools among parents meant that there was parental pressure on the primary schools and on local councillors to secure grammar school places for as many children as possible. A senior officer stated that committee members wanted detailed information on grammar school placements so as to deal with parents' problems sensibly, and that this led to the preparation of detailed statistics on grammar school allocations for the Schools Sub-Committee each autumn from 1954 onwards.

The second reason was that Middlesex County Council purchased places at a number of fee-paying secondary schools. After the appearance of the Ministry of Education's Manual on Choice of Schools¹ in August 1950, it became clear that full fees at independent schools might be paid by the LEA only when there was a shortage of suitable places in maintained schools. As the fee-paying places went to children who were qualified for a grammar school education, it became a moot point whether the LEA was, in fact, short of maintained grammar school places. The resulting discussions about the right proportion of grammar school places led to the adoption of a formula which will be explained in this chapter.

By and large selection at eleven was the preserve of professional staff. Modifications and changes in the procedure were the result of consultation and cooperation between teachers, educational psychologists and educational administrators, although the Education Committee would formally sanction the more important changes. During the 1950s, however, the eleven plus examination became a broader policy issue in which elected members became involved. Even then, the responsibility for working out a less formal method of selection and for operating it was placed squarely on the shoulders of the teaching profession and officers.

1. Manual of Guidance, Schools No.1, 23.8.50., HMSO. A detailed discussion of this with reference to fee-paying schools will be found in Part III of the thesis.

(a) Selection and Allocation at Eleven

Following the 1902 Education Act, Middlesex County Council had gradually built secondary grammar schools. In addition, places at grant-aided and independent schools were taken. Procedures for selecting pupils attending elementary schools for transfer to grammar schools had evolved in the inter-war years. There had been two written examinations set by a County Board of Examiners. The first was a preliminary examination in English and Arithmetic, after which elementary head teachers drew up an order of merit. In some parts of the County the child's school record was also considered.

On this basis a proportion of elementary school children 'qualified' to sit for the second examination, consisting of English, Arithmetic and a General Paper. At this second examination they were joined by children from private schools competing for free or special places in the available grammar schools. The Divisional Education Officer then prepared a further order of merit, and all candidates had their marks and position in the order of merit entered on a card. Likely candidates for admission were given an oral examination by an interviewing panel.¹

Even before the war, changes had taken place in an attempt to improve the relationship between grammar school entrance examination results and success in the secondary school. Head teachers were asked to give candid estimates of their pupils' suitability for a grammar school course and in particular to consider attainment, industry, intelligence, concentration, memory and school activities. An age correlation scale was introduced as another innovation. In 1937 and 1938 an IQ Test replaced the General Paper, the oral examination or interview was discontinued and the preliminary examination became not only an eliminating but also a qualifying one².

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1. For this very brief account of the pre-war selection procedure three Middlesex Education Dept. sources have been used: Report of the Secretary on the Examinations for Admissions to Secondary Schools, 1923 File No.82 entitled "Higher Education in Acton"; SchsSC/13/13.12.55, p.41, CEO's Report on Middlesex Selection Procedure.
 2. SchsSC/13/13.12.55, p.41, CEO's Report.

After the war, further changes were introduced and from 1947 - 1959 the following selection procedure was in operation throughout the County. It will be seen that many pre-war practices found their place in the new procedure.

Each year in February, primary school children in the transfer age group sat three forty minute tests in their own school on two consecutive days. The tests were standardised ones in English, Arithmetic and IQ. Scripts were marked by the children's own teachers with the aid of a marking key:

"Questions are so designed that alternative correct answers are not possible and by this means the marking is objective... The marks [are] ... checked and standardised according to the varying ages of the different children from a table ... provided by the Department of Education at the University of Edinburgh which has prepared the tests."¹

All children reaching

"an adequate standard of attainment in the tests - the County qualifying mark - were considered as obviously suited to a grammar school education and allocated places. Immediately below this mark came a group of children about whom there was some doubt as to the form of secondary education for which they were best suited. In these cases the results were considered in relation to the head teachers' gradings and any other factors available. Some ... children were then regarded on a combination of the criteria available as suitable for transfer to grammar school. These children became known as marginally qualified."²

Thus the results of the County tests were used to divide eleven-year olds into three groups: those who were eligible for grammar school without further consideration by reaching or exceeding the qualifying mark; those who were considered definitely unsuitable for an academic course; and those about whom there was some doubt about the right secondary course. Border-line pupils formed a group of between one third and one half as many children as those who reached the qualifying mark.

The procedure for dealing with border-line pupils was elaborate and by no means uniform throughout the County. Consideration was given

1. SchsSC/13/13.12.55, p.41, CEO's Report.

2. Ibid.

to this group between February and May. It often involved discussion with the child's primary head teacher, the prospective grammar school head and the educational psychologist. Pupils whose scores were within a certain range below the qualifying mark would in all areas be considered among the border-line group. But the spread of this range varied in relation to the availability of grammar school places. Consideration would also be given to any child whose test score was seriously at variance with the head teacher's assessment. The headmaster of one grammar school had in fact developed a special scheme - used for some years by several areas in deciding marginal cases - under which standardised numerical equivalents were substituted for the primary school gradings of each school¹.

It is helpful to tabulate the selection and allocation procedure. It is an attempt to reconstruct the sequence of events in any given school year. No absolutely precise timetable can be given because it varied from year to year and, in some respects, from area to area. But the table nevertheless illustrates certain important points, including the following:

1. The cooperation between and respective roles of teachers, officers and educational psychologists in the selection and allocation procedure.
2. Between 1947-59 the majority of grammar school places were allocated on test results alone.
3. The County qualifying mark was higher than the effective pass mark, which varied from area to area.
4. The fee-paying school heads had the first pick of children from among those who scored the County qualifying mark or higher and whose parents had given such a school as their first preference.
5. Places in maintained grammar schools were filled subsequently.
6. There was some pooling of grammar school places within the five zones of the County to overcome shortages in one area as compared with another.
7. All areas in the County gave individual consideration to doubtful cases and a proportion of the grammar school places was filled by marginally qualified pupils.

1. SchsSC/13/13.12.55, p.41, CEO's Report.

TableSelection and Allocation Procedure 1947-1959

<u>Date</u>	<u>Administra- tive Form or Card</u>	<u>Information given or Action taken</u>
Probably before Christmas	AS1	Form of instructions to primary school head teachers giving the County test dates; specifying the first and last dates of birth of children in the 'normal age group' to sit that year's tests and precise arrangements for the tests; requiring head teachers to compile an order of merit for their school.
Autumn Term	AS2	Form circulated through the primary school to parents of children in their last year at that school. Parents were asked to express their preferences for the type of secondary course and/or for particular schools (three grammar and three modern). This form was returned to the primary school head teacher, or, if the child was at an independent school, to the Divisional Education Officer.
Preceding County tests		Primary head teachers compiled an order of merit for the eleven plus age group at their school based on their assessment of the pupils.
February		On two consecutive days, children sat three forty minute standardised tests in English, Arithmetic and IQ. Test material was selected by a small Panel of Education Officers, educational psychologists and teacher representatives. Usually National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) or Moray House closed tests were used. Primary teachers marked tests of children in own school.
February	AS3	Test results for each child were recorded on an individual card. The child's position in the school's order of merit as a fraction of the total age group was also shown, together with parental choice of schools and certain details about the

child's schooling. Completed cards were sent by primary head teachers to their Divisional Education Office.

February
to
May

Precise sequence of events might vary from the order in which here listed, except for (a), which was always done first.

- (a) Divisional Office sent to County Education Department (Central Office) the AS3 cards of all children
 - (i) who had scored or exceeded the County qualifying mark - in the 1950s this was 370;
 - (ii) whose parents had given a fee-paying school as first preference.

Central Office compiled a list of applicants for each fee-paying school. In order to decide on admissions, fee-paying heads might rely on County test scores, set children a further entrance examination, interview children and/or parents, or combine these methods. School in due course notified Central Office the names of pupils offered a place.

Cards of unsuccessful candidates were then returned to Divisional Executive, so that children could be allocated to a maintained grammar school.

- (b) A meeting of Education Officers was held in each of the five zones into which the County was divided, after test results were available. The number of places at each maintained grammar school was centrally allocated for each part of the zone. Thus to some extent shortage of places in one part of the zone might be alleviated by available places in another part. A zonal pass mark (lower than the County qualifying mark) might also be fixed.

- (c) Divisional Education Office prepared an order of merit for children in area, based on test score. A line was drawn at a certain point and children above that line were regarded as eligible for a grammar school place.

- (d) Children whose test score had placed them "above the line" were placed in grammar schools. Parents'

preference would be taken into account, but if a particular school was over-subscribed, the parents' reasons for their preference (single-sex, denominational, family association, etc.) would be weighed among other factors, such as nearness of the child's home to the school. The impression has been gained that in most cases the Education Office staff allocated children to particular maintained schools, but in some areas the headmaster or mistress concerned made the choice, as did independent school heads.

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- (e) Marginal placements for the remaining maintained grammar school vacancies had then to be considered, according to the particular procedure adopted in the area concerned. In this field there was a great deal of experiment and over a period of years more importance came to be attached to the head teachers' assessments in the light of children's school record. The use of standard record cards, introduced to all Middlesex primary schools during the 1950s, played a part in this development. Head teachers could recommend any child for reconsideration, and in some areas local procedure provided panels to make the final decision; such panels would be composed of head teachers (primary and secondary), an educational psychologist and the Divisional Education Officer. Precise composition and number of members on panels varied from area to area.
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- (f) The remaining (majority) of children would be placed in secondary modern schools, usually the one nearest to their home, by the Divisional Education Office.
-

Usually
sometime
in May

Notification was sent to parents of child's placement, either through the primary school or direct by the Divisional Education Office.

It was noted in the previous section that in 1958 the Labour controlled County Council decided to abolish the formal eleven plus examination. Selection for grammar school continued, but from 1960

onwards the procedure was amended in two respects.

Firstly, the same type of tests were still taken by children, but as part of the ordinary school routine instead of on pre-announced, publicised days. The results of these were recorded on the school record card, introduced in 1952 and made compulsory in all Middlesex maintained primary schools in 1958. The card included a considerable amount of information about the child, apart from test results. This was available for use under the amended selection procedure, and head teachers could transfer it to card AS3.

Secondly, the professional selection panels which had reviewed cases of border-line pupils were in 1960 given the task of assessing the cases of all pupils, classifying them as "record card grammar" or "record card grammar marginal"¹. This was done on the basis of information received from the primary schools on card AS3. Both head teachers and parents could appeal if their judgment diverged from that of the panel. The panel then reconsidered the pupil in the light of the school record, and such additional information as head teachers supplied or the panel sought out. The panel made the final decision. Attempts to introduce lay members to these panels were resisted by officers, with the backing of the Chairman².

Under the revised procedure, the fee-paying schools continued to have the first pick, being notified of the names of children graded "record card grammar" by selection panels, whose parents had given the school as their first choice. It seems, however, that the demarcation

1. Or presumably as "record card modern" - but this aspect of the classification of children seems to have received little attention in officer discussions. The CEO subsequently reported to the Schools Sub-Committee that primary school head teachers would recommend to the selection panel one of four gradings for each child:

- i) no doubt, suited for academic course;
- ii) probably suited for academic course;
- iii) above average, capable of some GCE or extended course;
- iv) suited for normal 4-5 year course.

Furthermore, during parents' consultations, head teachers were to stress the opportunities now available in the secondary modern schools. But on allocation of children to particular schools, the CEO's Report concentrated on the grammar schools, no reference being made to the modern schools. (SchsSC/20/24.2.59.)

2. File 2. Correspondence between a Divisional Education Officer and the CEO 1961-2 and Memo submitted to Chairman dated 22.1.62.

between fully and marginally qualified candidates became somewhat blurred under the amended procedure, for in 1960 when the 370 County qualifying mark no longer applied, more names were forwarded to fee-paying school heads for their consideration¹.

This, then, was the procedure for allocating children to grammar schools. The next section shows the year by year results of this allocation as a percent of the age group, for the County as a whole and for each of the five zones.

1. File 2. Officers' Panel Meeting, 10.10.60.

(b) Number and Proportion of Eleven-Year Olds Placed in Grammar Schools¹

Middlesex County Council, in the main, placed its eleven-year olds either in grammar or in modern schools. Technical schools did not form an important part of the County Council's secondary provision. The first table gives the number of the normal eleven-year old age group, the number and proportion placed in grammar schools and the proportion placed in other secondary schools. This table shows that in 1964 the LEA was able to accommodate 4% more of the age group in grammar schools than in 1950, although the size of the age group was almost the same, because there were almost 1,000 extra grammar school places available.

(Table overleaf)

Between 1950 and 1964, the size of the age group had grown from 24,000 plus to over 37,000 in the peak year 1958, and had then declined. The Authority's building programme and some administrative adjustments in admissions between 1956-60 had prevented the proportion placed in grammar schools from sinking below 22% in the peak year. Thus throughout the years between 22 and 30% of the age group entered selective schools.

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1. Figures in this chapter are taken, year by year, from the Minutes of the Schools Sub-Committee meetings held in September, October or November. In this chapter all children placed in grammar schools by the County Council are included in the totals, irrespective of the type of grammar school to which they went. The figures exclude pupils educated privately, except those sent by the County Council to fee-paying schools for whom the County Council accepted total or partial financial responsibility. A more detailed analysis of the breakdown between maintained and fee-paying grammar school placements is made later, see especially Chapter 8(c).

Table

Numbers of Eleven-Year Old Children Transferred to
Various Secondary Schools in Middlesex. 1950-1964

Year	Size of Normal Age Group	Placements in Grammar Schools		Placements in Other Schools (mainly Modern) % of Age Group
		Number	% of Age Group	
1950	24,424	6,359	26.04	73.96
1951	23,983	6,417	26.75	73.25
1952	21,702	6,298	29.02	70.98
1953	25,198	6,425	25.50	74.50
1954	28,054	6,677	23.80	76.20
1955	30,583	7,198	23.54	76.46
1956	28,445	6,778	23.83	76.17
1957	30,808	7,469	24.24	75.76
1958	37,160	8,327	22.41	77.59
1959	30,917	7,700	24.91	75.09
1960	28,320	7,650	27.01	72.99
1961	26,077	7,255	27.82	72.18
1962	25,261	7,446	29.48	70.52
1963	24,790	7,502	30.26	69.74
1964	24,265	7,333	30.22	69.78

The provision of grammar school places in Middlesex was generous compared with other progressive areas, but it was unevenly spread in a large and peculiarly shaped County. The reason for this unevenness was mainly historical. Older established districts had been provided with municipal grammar schools after the 1902 Education Act. Population had often declined in such areas and provision was therefore generous. In newer districts where houses had sprung up in the 1930s, provision was less generous. Shortages of provision in one area could not always be made good by placing children elsewhere because the schools where vacancies existed were not necessarily accessible to them. Some attempt to remedy the uneven spread of places was made, and from 1947 the County was divided into five zones. Grammar school allocations were then made within each zone, although interchange of pupils also occurred in peripheral areas between the zones¹.

In addition, the building programme of the LEA must have helped to even out provision. The next table shows the percentage of the eleven-year old age group reaching grammar school in each of the five zones. It will be seen that whereas the proportion ranged from 21% to 36% in 1951, by 1962 the range was considerably smaller, between 27.86% and 30.26%

(Table overleaf)

1. SchsSC/13/13.12.55, p.41, CEO's Report.

Table

Percent of Eleven-Year Old Children transferred to Grammar
Schools in the five Zones of Middlesex. 1951-1962

(figures for 1952 and 1953 not available).

Year	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	County Average
1951	29.00	36.00	24.00	21.00	28.00	26.75
1954	24.06	24.72	25.77	19.42	24.64	23.80
1955	23.85	25.19	23.79	21.59	24.50	23.54
1956	26.05	22.68	24.17	21.55	23.86	23.83
1957	23.99	28.44	24.23	22.80	24.27	24.24
1958	20.04	25.50	24.49	20.97	22.72	22.41
1959	24.58	29.47	25.91	23.04	23.76	24.91
1960	27.53	28.56	27.21	27.11	25.72	27.01
1961	28.16	26.89	28.51	26.69	28.78	27.82
1962	29.99	30.17	30.26	29.97	27.86	29.48

The Zones were made up as follows:

Zone 1: Edmonton, Enfield, Hornsey, Southgate, Tottenham,
Wood Green, Potters Bar.

Zone 2: Finchley and Friern Barnet, Hendon.

Zone 3: Harrow, Wembley, Willesden, North-West Middlesex.

Zone 4: Acton, Ealing, Hayes and Harlington, Southall.

Zone 5: Brentford and Chiswick, Heston and Isleworth,
Twickenham, South-West Middlesex.

It could be held, then, that the LEA in the decade between the early fifties and the early sixties remedied inequality of opportunity to obtain a grammar school education. But teachers would have been the first to deny this. Opportunity had to be matched to ability, and in relation to ability the inequality of opportunity persisted. In the 1950s ability was measured by standardised tests in the eleven plus examination. The tests children took were identical in all parts of the County, but the proportion of eleven-year olds reaching the County qualifying mark varied widely. Thus in relation to measured ability, it was much harder to secure a grammar school place in some zones than in others.

For the year 1951, and then regularly between 1954 and 1959, the CEO prepared figures for the Schools Sub-Committee comparing the percent of children reaching the County qualifying mark with the percent placed in grammar schools in each zone¹. These figures, given in the attached table, explain why the effective pass mark score was lower than the County qualifying score - there were grammar school vacancies to be filled by candidates with lower scores.

(For table see page 155)

That many more marginal candidates reached grammar school in some zones than in others is brought out by graphs, based on the figures for each zone. These show the relation between the proportion of eleven-year olds reaching the County qualifying mark and the proportion placed in grammar schools. It will be seen that the gap varied considerably between zones, and that two of the zones (zones 1 and 4) had a consistently lower proportion of children who reached the County qualifying mark.

(For graphs see page 156)

1. From 1960 onwards, the County qualifying mark disappeared from the selection procedure, and thus the comparison was not continued beyond that year.

TableThe Eleven Plus County Test and Grammar School AdmissionsNormal Age Group 1951-1959

(figures for 1952 and 1953 not available)

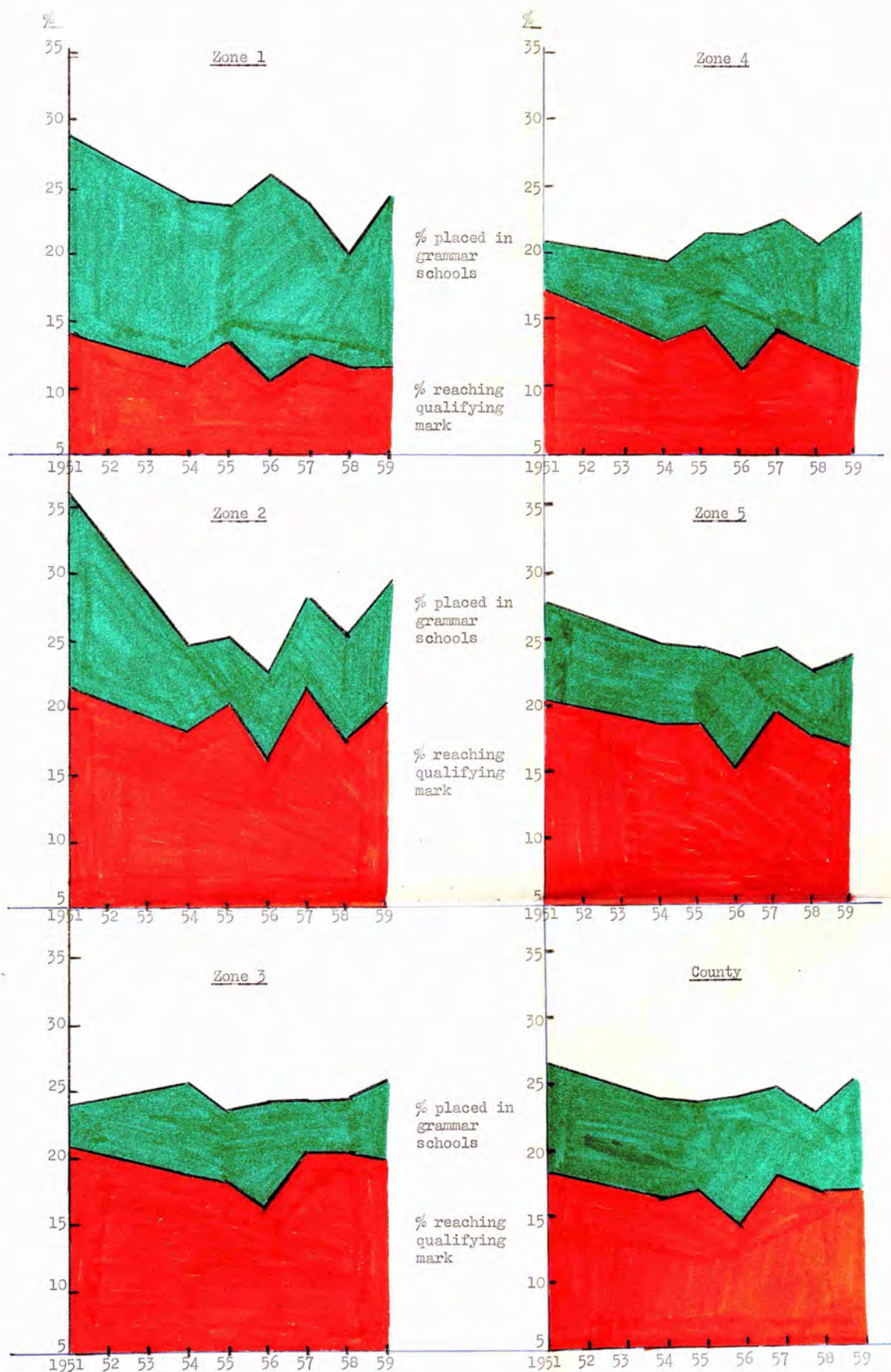
% Q = % Reaching Qualifying Mark

% P = % Placed in Grammar Schools

Year	Zone 1		Zone 2		Zone 3		Zone 4		Zone 5		County Average		Year
	% Q	% P	% Q	% P	% Q	% P	% Q	% P	% Q	% P	% Q	% P	
1951	14.00	29.00	21.50	36.00	21.00	24.00	17.00	21.00	20.50	28.00	18.40	26.75	1951
1954	11.40	24.06	18.17	24.72	18.84	25.77	13.55	19.42	18.55	24.64	16.18	23.80	1954
1955	13.36	23.85	20.22	25.19	18.08	23.79	14.74	21.59	18.80	24.50	16.92	23.54	1955
1956	10.62	26.05	16.24	22.68	16.12	24.17	11.13	21.55	15.17	23.86	14.01	23.83	1956
1957	12.46	23.99	21.95	28.44	20.29	24.23	15.44	22.80	19.79	24.27	17.95	24.24	1957
1958	11.60	20.04	17.81	25.50	20.25	24.49	12.92	20.97	17.91	22.72	16.33	22.41	1958
1959	11.65	24.58	20.92	29.47	19.89	25.91	11.96	23.04	16.97	23.76	16.33	24.91	1959

Source: Minutes, Schools Sub-Committee, in the Autumn of each year.

Graphs Showing Relation between Proportion of Eleven-Year Olds
Reaching County Qualifying Mark and Proportion Placed in Grammar Schools 1951-59



Source: Minutes, Schools Sub-Committee, in the autumn of each year.

Difference of grammar school provision after the war was explained largely by historical factors. But how could the difference of measured ability be explained? By social class? The percent children in each Borough reaching the County qualifying mark in 1954¹ when plotted against the percent occupied and retired males according to social class in any given Borough² produced no consistent correlation. Nevertheless, teachers and councillors often quoted Tottenham (in zone 1) and Harrow (in zone 3) by way of contrast, the first regularly with a low and the second regularly with a high proportion of children reaching the County qualifying mark. The difference in the social class composition of the population was certainly striking as between these two Boroughs. In Harrow, 29.5% males belonged to social class I and II, and only 14.5% to social class IV and V, whereas for Tottenham the corresponding figures were 11.4% and 25.8%³. More detailed data would be needed to test adequately correlation between eleven plus success and social class.

This leads to a further point. Middlesex LEA held that the County was a high ability area, and on those grounds justified a higher than average provision of grammar school places. An Office note⁴ stated that the Middlesex population had a Norm of 107 compared to one of 100 for the whole country. This certainly does correlate with the fact that the County as a whole had a higher than average proportion of occupied and retired males in social class I and II and a lower than average in class IV and V. The 1951 Census gave the figures as follows:

	%	%
	<u>Social Class I & II</u>	<u>Social Class IV & V</u>
Middlesex County	23.5	19.3
England and Wales	18.0	29.0

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1. SchsSC/11/19.10.54, Supplement to CEO's Report.
 2. 1951 Census. England and Wales. County Reports. Middlesex. HMSO, 1953. Table 27, p.69.
 3. Ibid.
 4. File 1. Office Note dated 8.7.54.

It was indicated that the LEA had to determine what was the right proportion of grammar school places¹. In 1950, the CEO in a Report² examined how a line of demarcation might be drawn between a pupil's suitability for a grammar or a modern school course. He suggested reference might be made to the views of other LEAs. Some of national repute had indicated that between 15 and 20 percent of children were suited for an academic education. Middlesex provided admission to grammar schools for 26% of the age group in 1950 against a national average of 21-22% in 1949. By this yardstick provision in Middlesex was therefore on the liberal side. The same might also be concluded on the basis of the number of children who completed the full grammar school course and the number who passed the school certificate examination. But the Committee made no immediate decision, and these criteria were not the ones which were adopted.

The following year the CEO presented the first detailed figures of the number and percent of children reaching the County qualifying mark and the number and percent actually placed in grammar schools, set out separately for each zone³. He now proposed a new principle for judging whether grammar school provision in any part of the County was 'adequate' or 'inadequate'. The Committee accepted that provision be regarded as 'adequate' when pupils reaching the County qualifying mark, plus one-third of their number, could be found grammar school places.

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1. Figures in the Middlesex County Council Annual Budget show that the gross cost per grammar school pupil was considerably higher than per modern school pupil. For example, the Budget (year ending 31.3.61) gave the actual cost for 1958/9 as £83.9.0. compared to £58.12.0. Part of the extra cost is accounted for by the higher proportion of older pupils in grammar schools. The decision of MCC to favour a higher than average proportion of grammar school places involved higher expenditure per pupil. But cost appears not to have entered into the discussions, except when the number of fee-paying grammar places was examined, which cost more than maintained grammar school places. The last point is fully dealt with in Part III of the thesis.
 2. SchsSC/6/14.12.50, p.8.
 3. SchsSC/7/1.11.51, p.85.

The adding of one-third was proposed in order to allow border-line candidates to receive consideration, some of whom would then be placed as marginal grammar school pupils. The acceptance of the formula of "qualified plus one third" made it possible to calculate for each area whether there was a shortage of grammar school places or not. This had important consequences for the purchase of fee-paying places by the LEA, which are fully dealt with in Part III, especially in chapter 8.

(c) Criticisms of Selection and Allocation Procedure

"... to assume that the 'top-layer' in intelligence should always go to the grammar school was contrary to the purpose of the 1944 Act."¹

So wrote the CEO, referring to teacher opinion in the early post-war years. Yet the whole selection and allocation procedure was based precisely on this assumption.

The more serious criticisms made of eleven plus selection and allocation procedure often involved an implied or overt attack on the existing organisation of secondary education. By the late fifties and early sixties this was fully recognised by the CEO. In 1958, when the Labour controlled County Council decided by 59 to 49 votes to abolish existing eleven plus selection, the CEO stated that

"... the effect of these criticisms is to call into question not only present questions of selection at eleven plus, but also the general system of organisation of secondary education."²

In 1964, an office memorandum stated

"Selection procedure ... is obviously only one aspect of the wider subject of the organisation of secondary education..."³

There were critics who aimed in the long run at the abolition of the selective schools system, but this made them no less concerned to improve selection procedure in the short run. Others, who accepted as basically sound the system of grammar and modern schools, shared the desire to improve selection procedure. After all, whenever it could be shown that procedures worked unfairly, remedies had to be sought unless the general attack on the selective system were to gain ground.

In looking at particular criticisms, their complex origin must be borne in mind. Some wanted to improve a process in which they believed.

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1. SchsSC/13/13.12.55, p.41, CEO's Report on Selection Procedure. The same opinion was expressed in The New Secondary Education, published by the Ministry of Education in 1947, to which reference is made in Part I, Chapter 2, p.39.
 2. SchsSC/19/18.11.58, p.29, CEO's Report.
 3. File 1. Memo dated 7.2.64, on Transfer of Pupils to Secondary Schools after the establishment of the new Outer London Boroughs under the 1963 London Government Act.

Others wanted to reduce the objectionable characteristics of a procedure they hoped ultimately to abolish. Among the more basic criticisms of selection and allocation procedures were the following:

The detrimental effect of the eleven plus examination on the work of the junior schools and the anxiety it caused pupils and parents;
The harmful effect on the development of the modern schools of filling grammar schools to capacity;

The continued inequality of opportunity in relation to ability to secure a grammar school place;

The arbitrariness of the pass mark, leading to difficulty of fairly selecting marginal pupils from among the doubtful candidates;

The majority of parents had little choice of school.

Certain detailed criticisms were also made, mainly by teachers, concerning the selection procedure timetable and the notification of results to parents.

To take the major points first:

In 1958, the CEO commented that

"The importance generally attached to the results of the selection procedure has produced an unhappy effect on the work of the primary schools."¹

Perusal of the CEO's various reports shows that this was not a new discovery. Casting his thoughts back², he showed that awareness of this repercussion existed pre-war. It had become increasingly obvious that the grammar school entrance examination strengthened the temptation merely to prepare children for tests. This realisation had contributed to modifications in the testing process. An Intelligence Test had replaced the General Paper in the late 1930s. In 1949, on the suggestion of HMI, in an endeavour to encourage more liberal curricula in the primary schools, double weighting was given for a time to the results of the IQ test. This test was thought to be least influenced by special preparation or coaching.

1. SchsSC/19/19.11.58, p.29, CEO's Report.

2. SchsSC/13/13.12.55, p.41.

That primary schools were subject to pressure to get good eleven plus results was confirmed in interviews. A grammar school teacher¹ with long experience on various consultative committees stated that parents in middle class residential areas would not send their child to a modern school since in their eyes it meant accepting that the child was 'dum'. The approach of the eleven plus examination made such parents very anxious because failure would mean having to pay for a private school place. At such a time parents were embarrassed to tell each other that their child had 'passed' for grammar school in case the other one's had not. Groups of parents criticised the number of grammar school places allocated to particular primary schools. This teacher added, however, that in recent years more parents had come to accept that the modern school could be a good and proper place for their child.

A former primary school head teacher², one of the doyens among Middlesex teachers, recollected that after the 1944 Act the primary schools had pressure put on them to get good eleven plus results. During the war, not all children had sat the grammar school entrance examination. Head teachers had selected, on their knowledge of the children, the most promising pupils. To the average number of grammar school places obtained by that school an extra one third was added, and this was the number of pupils sent forward for the examination. But after the war parents had gone to councillors and complained that their children were debarred from the tests. So then all children had sat the tests³.

If school was going to be compared with school for examination successes, he said, each school would press their certainties. This led to streaming in the primary school, the A stream tending to get the best teacher and facilities. Other children would be accepted as slower learners, and the pace set for their stream adjusted accordingly. Their

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1. Interview: Mr. Finch, member of Association of Assistant Masters.
 2. Interview: Mr. Dove.
 3. Another primary head teacher, Mrs. Crane, implied during an interview that a newly elected County Councillor who became Chairman of the local Education Committee in 1949, accused her of not preparing the children for the eleven plus examination. Possibly parents had complained to the Chairman.

situation was aggravated because less was expected from them by parents and teachers alike.

Despite these pressures, this particular head teacher thought he was the first in Middlesex to unstream his primary school, in consultation with staff and parents. The eleven plus results of the school actually improved and he thought this was due to a happier staff, none of whom had to take a class of 'duds'. Parents also badgered their children to work well because they were no longer labelled through streaming. This head teacher certainly supported as many pupils for entry to grammar school as he could, because he thought certain jobs were closed to them if they went to the modern school.

Primary school streaming, he added, often meant that the half dozen or so children from poor homes who had been in the bottom stream in the primary school would not have had a fair deal. After transfer, these children would most likely form the D or E stream in the secondary modern school, with similar children from the other contributory primary schools. The class teacher of these children, often the least experienced on the staff of the modern school, would never have a chance. This, then, was one harmful effect on the secondary modern school of intensive streaming in the primary school, brought about by the competitive eleven plus examination.

But why should the modern school be streamed, it might well be asked. The fact that many modern schools developed five-year O level courses during the 1950s was no doubt one reason. The abler secondary modern children were placed in the top stream to prepare for examinations and success in this field added to the prestige of the modern schools. But by the early 1960s there were 1,000 additional grammar school places in Middlesex, whereas the age group for transfer to secondary school was, after the peak, no larger than in 1950.

In view of the practice to fill grammar schools to capacity, this meant that standards fell in the grammar schools and modern schools were starved of talent for their developing five-year courses. The CEO drew attention to the seriousness of the situation if the numbers admitted to grammar schools remained unchanged:

"... already in some areas ... less than 50% of the pupils admitted to grammar schools were gaining an adequate GCE result. Concern was expressed that too many children were being admitted to grammar schools which deprived the modern schools of their abler pupils and caused decreases in the number of advanced courses which could be organised in the modern schools."¹

The following year the CEO called attention to the fact that Divisional Executives

"had obviously filled grammar school places to capacity which was detrimental to the modern schools and also tended to lower the standards in the grammar schools."

The CEO asked the Sub-Committee whether

"it wished to take exception to this action by the Divisional Executives."

The Sub-Committee was of the opinion that

"the Divisional Executives must maintain a more careful selection and asked the CEO to frame a statement of the Committee's policy for consideration at the next meeting with a view to circulation to the Divisional Executives."²

No trace of such a statement was found in the Minutes of the next two meetings.

At an Officers' Panel meeting³ three years earlier attention had been drawn to the overall increase in the percent of children transferred to grammar schools. One Divisional Officer had explained that

".. it had been necessary to fill all the places in the grammar schools in his area in order to supplement the places available in the secondary schools."

What did he mean by "supplement"? It seems likely that this Officer wanted to continue supplementing maintained by fee-paying grammar school places, and unless all his maintained places were filled, he could hardly argue that such supplementation was necessary⁴.

At the same meeting another Divisional Officer pointed out that he had made available grammar school places to the rest of his zone, but these had not been taken up. Possibly the explanation for this was

1. SchsSC/26/25.9.62.

2. SchsSC/27/22.10.63.

3. File 2. Officers' Panel on Secondary Transfers. Meeting 10.10.60.

4. It was fully explained in Part I, Chapter 2(d), that such supplementation was permissible only when there was a shortage of places in the LEA sector.

similar. It could be that Divisional Executives in this zone wanted to fill their own grammar schools so that they could 'supplement' provision by taking places in the fee-paying sector. The records leave this open.

This leads to the next major criticism of grammar school allocation in Middlesex: the uneven spread of grammar school provision. The system of pooling places within five geographical zones had been devised in 1947 to help remedy the uneven distribution of places. The above paragraph illustrates that the system worked imperfectly. This meant that the chance of a place for a doubtful candidate varied widely in the County.

There were really two criticisms here. One was that the total provision of grammar school places was inadequate, especially in some parts of the County. This criticism was met by the building programme during the 1950s. But the other criticism still held good and was that in relation to ability, maldistribution of places continued and made for unequal opportunities. The Harrow child had to be that much abler to get to a grammar school than the Tottenham child.

Detailed zonal statistics were presented to the Schools Sub-Committee for the first time in November 1951 when it became necessary to define what was meant by 'shortage' of grammar school places. The formula of "qualified plus one third"¹ had then been adopted as the yardstick for judging adequacy. Some NUT members had seen these zonal statistics, and as a result feared a cut in grammar school places. In March 1952 a senior officer received a Middlesex County Teachers' Association (MCTA) deputation and assured them that the attempt to estimate adequacy of grammar school places had been made because of the need to decide the number of places required at independent schools.

"No one was in favour of losing the cream of Middlesex schools to the Independent Schools and the report sought to prevent this and no more."²

1. For details of this formula see pp.158-159 of this chapter.
 2. 916/3/7.4.52, Report of Deputation to Middlesex Education Department, 27.3.52.

Possibly the teachers' fear was based on their concern that the Ministry was trying to get children into modern rather than grammar schools because modern schools were cheaper to build¹. Circular 245 issued by the Ministry had evidently given the teachers this impression.

The teachers were obviously eager to keep an eye on total grammar school provision and on its distribution. In 1953, when the MCTA Secretary requested information similar to that in the 1951 Report, the CEO replied that the matter was under constant review, but that such comprehensive surveys were not likely in the near future².

However, from 1954 onwards, zonal statistics on the eleven plus test results and grammar school placements were in fact prepared every autumn. Yet teacher representatives were given the County totals only in response to their request for information. In 1957 the Secretary of the Joint Twenty approached the CEO with a view to receiving, on a confidential basis, the detailed zonal analysis of eleven plus results and grammar school placements. This was ultimately refused on the grounds that the figures were confidential to the Committee³.

Why was this information hushed up in this way? The annual zonal figures did highlight the unequal opportunities which characterised the County's system of grammar schools. Evidently this was a field of educational administration which was highly sensitive to criticism and councillors and officers accepted - teachers less so - that the information should be confined to the small circle of Education Officers and the Schools Sub-Committee. At a Meeting of Education Officers in 1954

"Officers indicated that they would like to receive summaries of the kind circulated for their confidential information. Requests for information concerning these statistics by Divisional Executives or any outside body should be referred to the CEO."⁴

In the following year, when the next set of figures were circulated,

"Officers were asked to treat the information as strictly private and confidential."⁵

1. 916/3/7.4.52.

2. 916/4/14.9.53.

3. File 1. Correspondence between CEO & Secretary of Joint Twenty: 4.7.57, 10.10.57, 15.10.57, 26.3.58 and 2.4.58.

4. File 3. Officers' Meeting. 5.11.54.

5. Ibid., 14.10.55.

In later years one of the Divisional Officers commented

"that no useful purpose was served by making public these statistics for each area, although he could appreciate that they had an administrative value."¹

He was informed by a senior officer that the information was required by the Schools Sub-Committee. When that Senior Officer was later interviewed, and asked why these figures were kept so secret, the reply was that the information they conveyed was explosive. It was impossible to tell parents in Tottenham that their children were "unintelligent or duds". That would be cruel. Such a thing could not be said publicly. It was added that teachers wanted the figures because they knew the standard of entry in Harrow was much higher than in Tottenham².

Three teachers, one grammar and two primary heads, were also questioned on this topic. The grammar school teacher³ thought the information was withheld because it might have leaked to the general public if some thousands of teachers had seen it. The unequal opportunity revealed by the figures was politically a red hot brick. Conservatives might fear the resulting indictment, and Labour could equally be asked why they had done nothing about the matter when in control. The teaching profession would have been discontented because of the inequality revealed. This could in due course have led them to press for change.

The primary head teachers both stated that they knew the zonal system was working unfairly. Harrow was mentioned by both as the area where it was hard for children to get into a grammar school. The pass mark for admission varied and, said one, was always known to be arbitrary. He added that so long as selection continued, teachers favoured the building of more grammar schools. The other head teacher referred also to the fact that it was a status symbol for teachers to get children into grammar school, and that they were themselves interested as parents of eleven-year old children⁴.

1. File 2. Officers' Panel Meeting, 10.10.60.

2. Interview: Miss Trout. She added - had I heard about a certain prominent teacher, an active Communist NUT member, who complicated matters very much. I gained the impression that this may have been an additional reason for withholding confidential information.

3. Interview: Mr. Finch.

4. Interviews: Mrs. Crane and Mr. Dove.

The awareness among teachers and officers that the pass mark was arbitrary and varied from area to area made for further difficulties, among them the fair selection of marginally qualified pupils. A Divisional Officer¹ stated that selection for maintained grammar schools was done on ranking in relation to the pass mark, which varied from area to area according to the number of places available. To fill any remaining places, one went below the pass mark. He added:

"The validity of the pass mark was always in doubt. It is the drawing of a line at a certain point and those above that mark are in, the remainder have 'failed'. Drawing that line is wrong."

A primary head teacher² explained the idea of the pass mark like this: the Moray House test, used over many years by Middlesex, placed the grammar school admission figure at 115 with a mean of 100. As the children took three tests, and their scores were added, then any child scoring 345 should have been regarded as eligible for grammar school. But Zone 1 was the only area where the effective pass mark was as low as that. In Harrow it would be about 360.

This was confirmed by Notes from a Report of the Officers' Panel on Marginal Candidates³. According to this, in 1956 Harrow made an arbitrary choice of a lower limit of 356 for the marginal group, plus a few pupils specially recommended by head teachers. Since twice the number of pupils was considered as there were places, the effective pass mark may well have been 360 in that year. The same Report mentioned, for different areas, pass marks of 350, 356 and 364.

Yet apart from the pass mark in a particular area of Middlesex, there was the County qualifying mark, itself the result of drawing an arbitrary line, which in any given year was uniform throughout the County. Children reaching this mark were considered definitely as suited to a grammar school education. From 1954 to 1959 the County qualifying mark was 370, higher than the effective pass mark anywhere in the County. What was the meaning of this particular score, as compared to any other?

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1. Interview: Mr. Whale.
 2. Interview: Mrs. Crane.
 3. File 3. Report dated 2.11.56.

Apparently the top score of a child in any one test would be 140¹; if this high score were attained in all three tests, such a child's score would be 420. Thus the County qualifying score was 50 marks below the highest possible score, and 25 above the Moray House recommended score for a grammar school education.

On what basis was the line drawn at 370 rather than any other figure? To this no satisfactory answer was found in the records, nor in interviews. What was clear, however, was the use of the qualifying score in administrative practice, and as a basis for policy decisions about grammar school provision. The use to which the 370 score was put was twofold:

First, only children reaching this score were eligible for consideration for a County-financed fee-paying place². Second, the particular County qualifying score provided a uniform yardstick for comparing children throughout the County. The score was used to calculate the proportion of eleven-year olds in any given area considered definitely suited to a grammar school education. This proportion (plus one third of it - also an arbitrary figure) was then used to assess the adequacy or inadequacy of grammar school provision. This meant that the adoption of a higher qualifying score would have resulted in the building of fewer grammar schools, whereas a lower one would have had the opposite policy implications. If shortage of places on the given formula could be shown to exist, then supplementation was justified. In the short-term supplementation took the form of buying fee-paying places, in the long-term of building new maintained grammar schools.

1. Interview: Mrs. Crane.

2. SchsSC/3/20.10.49, pp.113 and 118. This is the earliest reference traced to the CEO's proposal that only fully qualified pupils should be eligible for fee-paying places. The Sub-Committee accepted this with the minor reservation that a marginal pupil should be eligible if no County grammar school vacancy could be offered. But in such cases, parents were to contribute to fees on an income scale.

The post-war qualifying score was not the first attempt to achieve a uniform standard for grammar school admission in Middlesex. According to a Report¹ dated 1923, the selection procedure was amended in the hope that the same qualifying standard would be applied in admitting free-place and fee-paying pupils to particular schools², and that the minimum standard for admission would be the same throughout the County. The Report also stated that the results of the preliminary examination of elementary school pupils should make possible a general stocktaking of the adequacy or inadequacy of existing secondary school accommodation and of scholarship arrangements in the light of the number of children who could profit from a grammar school course. It all sounds so similar to the review by the CEO, nearly 30 years later, in 1950-51.

From early records it was clear that no uniform standard for admission to grammar school was in fact achieved throughout the County preceding the 1944 Education Act. And thus in this respect the problems Middlesex faced in the early post-war years were similar to those faced before the war. The County qualifying standard which pre-war had been required for an LEA-financed free or special place at a County or other grammar school, was after the war required for an LEA-financed free or assisted place at a fee-paying school. That presumably is why one Divisional Officer thought that places at independent and direct grant schools after the war still had "something of the flavour of 'scholarship' places."⁴ They were the prizes for the most able children. Presumably, therefore, the qualifying standard had to be higher than that of the general run of children who secured admission to grammar schools. The fee-paying schools were not averse to this arrangement. On the contrary, it assured them of a high ability intake. Many of their fee-payers will

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1. MEC. Report of the Secretary on the Examinations for Admission to Secondary Schools. By B.S. Gott. 1.12.1923.
 2. Before the 1944 Act, fees were charged in LEA secondary (grammar) schools. A system of free and later of special places (the 'scholarship' places) ensured that the most able elementary school children went to grammar school irrespective of their parents' ability to pay the fees. Children not securing these scholarships could apply for admission as fee-payers.
 3. File 82 (1933) and File 126 (1943).
 4. File 3 /20. Letter from Mr. Whale to CEO dated 29.12.61.

have been drawn from eleven plus 'failures' whose parents would not accept that their child was "dum", and who were able and willing to pay the fees when a modern school was the only alternative.

Section 76 of the 1944 Education Act stipulates that children are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents, provided this is

"compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure..."

The eleven plus examination and local selection panels decided whether a child's "instruction and training" should be provided in a grammar or a modern school. This was a professional judgment and in effect limited parents' choice. But the allocation procedure limited the choice of some parents much more than of others. Parents whose children were eligible for grammar school had a wide choice of schools; the majority of parents whose children had to go to a modern school had very little choice within the state system. An attempt by the Labour controlled County Council to abolish the eleven-plus in comprehensive school catchment areas resulted in a wave of protest from parents, who insisted on their children's right to sit the examination, and on parental choice of a grammar school if the child passed¹. When Conservative councillors took this up at a County Council meeting, the Labour Chairman of the Education Committee stated²:

"There are many parents who ... have no opportunity of choosing the secondary school to which they [their children] go..."

The criticism that most parents had no choice was expressed in the press in 1951. Form AS2, distributed to parents, gave details of grammar but not of modern schools, thus restricting parental choice for modern school pupils³. At this time catchment areas were in operation for secondary modern schools. Two officers were asked about this in interviews. A senior County Officer⁴ stated that it was bad enough to

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1. This matter is fully dealt with in the next chapter, see especially Chapter 6(c).
 2. Barnet Press, 2.4.49. Report of MCC Meeting held 31.3.49.
 3. File 3. Meeting of Officers' Panel & Representatives of Joint Twenty. 24.10.51.
 4. Interview: Miss Trout.

allow parental choice for grammar school:

"We gave very wide choice, and travelling expenses were very considerable - some local committees objected to this. We could not possibly give that same choice for all the secondary modern children. Besides, there were some old schools which would never have been filled if it had been left to parental choice, but we had to use and fill these schools because of shortage of buildings. So choice of secondary modern school depended very much on local circumstances."

A Divisional Education Officer¹ said

"It was unheard of for a youngster who did not get a selective place to go outside his area. It was accepted that there should be a wide choice of grammar schools, and fares would be paid if distance was more than three miles. But for modern schools children stayed in their own Borough."

From these answers it may be concluded that officers considered it administratively impossible to give parents of less able children any or as wide a choice of school as was afforded parents of abler children. On the other hand it may also be inferred that officers took for granted that the LEA must offer choice of grammar school, whilst choice of modern school had little importance. If this inference is correct, it reveals an attitude of mind among officers.

Perhaps it was the existence of a particular attitude among officers which contributed to certain specific criticisms of the selection procedure. In two different years teacher representatives criticised certain administrative practices in notifying parents of the eleven plus results. In 1956, evidently the envelopes used had by their different size or shape provided a guide to the letter's content². In 1959, two teacher representatives informally met a senior County Officer and the County Educational Psychologist³. One teacher said parents had that year received notification on a Friday.

"This led to upsets at school between those children who had been successful and those who had failed."

If results were received on a Saturday, children would have the weekend "to get over the emotional disturbance." The Senior County Officer

1. Interview, Mr. Whale.

2. File 3. Report to Officers' Meeting on 26.10.56. of Officers' Panel Meeting held 11.7.56.

3. File 1. Notes on informal meeting held 21.7.59.

indicated that Divisional Officers were aware of this problem, and promised to raise it again with them.

"There was then some discussion on the methods adopted locally for sending out notifications to parents. Although uniformity had been requested, it seemed (according to teachers) that there were still unfortunate variations. Small cyclostyled letters for failure, larger envelopes etc. for success."

Teacher representatives over many years tried to change the selection procedure timetable. They argued the eleven plus test should be held later in the spring term,

".. when the child has reached the highest point of maturity.."

Under present arrangements, even allowing "for administrative needs to make any scheme work", the child seemed to be "completely overlooked".¹ The officers went very carefully into the request of the teachers, but year after year the same objection to a later test date was raised. It was administratively not possible. The difficulty concerned the placements in fee-paying schools. The teachers had the impression that this was no longer the real problem. The officers disagreed:

"The problem associated with the placings at the direct grant, etc. schools is not, as the teachers may suggest, an insignificant one. In 1957 of 5,531 children reaching qualifying standard...., 1,750 had to be given consideration for the vacancies at these schools. This figure exceeds the whole of the normal age group in places like Heston and Isleworth, Twickenham and even Wembley."²

A later test date would mean failure

"to complete the direct grant, independent and out-County placings before Easter, .. this in turn would delay the placings in County grammar schools until some time during the summer term,"³

and thus very late notification of parents.

Officers bore in mind not only the LEAs fee-paying placements, but also private arrangements by parents with fee-paying schools. In 1962 the Easter holiday dates were later than usual. Notes for an Officers' Panel meeting pointed out that

1. File 1. Letter from teacher representative to CEO, 27.9.57.

2. File 1. Office Note dated 2.10.57 - Item for Joint Consultative Committee: Dates 11+ Tests.

3. Ibid.

"Headteachers will be rather pushed to make a case for any individual reconsideration to the panel before the date of notification if it is similar to last year... I don't think we should put off notification later than a date in May - parents are often hanging fire on fee-paying places pending the notification of the Committee's selection procedure."¹

Presumably some parents reserved a fee-paying place on a tentative basis in case their child failed to get an LEA-sponsored free place, or 'failed' the eleven plus and thus had no chance of a maintained grammar school place either. In 1962, the need of these parents for early notification seems to have overshadowed the need for adequate time for reconsideration of marginal pupils.

Teachers seem to have been equally concerned that parents be notified of test results as early as possible, and for similar reasons. An NUT member in 1956 prepared a Memo on Revision of Selection Procedure² which drew attention to the fact that

"qualified candidates opting for independent and direct grant schools are aware of their success through the communications they receive from these schools. All other candidates have to await the County's official notification made many weeks later."

Furthermore

"It has been alleged that some candidates give a direct grant or independent school as their first preference in order to obtain early indication of their examination performance. ... there would appear to be no justification for withholding from qualified candidates early notification of their suitability for an academic course of study. Simultaneously, a large body of candidates who are better suited to follow a secondary modern course, could also receive notification. Such arrangements would at least be appreciated by parents who seek places at independent schools in the event of their children's failure to obtain a place at a maintained grammar school..."

Throughout the post-war period it was assumed that the fee-paying schools should have the first pick and that the timetable had to allow for this. Perhaps this practice was another illustration of an unchallenged attitude among officers: that the ablest children should

1. File 2. Notes for Officers' Panel meeting, 7.2.62.

2. 916/6/4.6.56.

go to fee-paying schools if their parents wished it¹.

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1. Apart from the references quoted above, the following also illustrate the effect of fee-paying placements on the selection procedure timetable:-

Meeting of Officers' Panel and Representatives of the Joint
Twenty, 24.10.51. (File 3).

In an attempt to reduce the time between test dates and notification of parents, "every effort should be made to expedite the selection procedure for free place holders at direct grant and independent schools."

Meetings of Officers' Panel, 17.7.53 and 20.7.53. (File 3).

Account was taken of representations from teachers' organisations that test dates should be as late as possible. "... a period of at least 8 weeks was necessary between the date of the tests and the end of the Spring Term if allocations to direct grant, independent and out-county maintained schools were to be completed before the Easter vacation..."

Schools Sub-Committee Minutes, No.12, 26.9.55, p.71.

Teachers' associations had raised test dates and this had been discussed at a Meeting of the Middlesex Excepted Districts' Association on 26.4.55. This Association asked officers to give full consideration to the matter. This had been done at two Officers' Meetings. Since 1947, the date for informing parents had been pushed forward by five weeks, but tests were held only three weeks earlier. "This had been achieved by arranging test dates so as to allow time for direct grant and independent school places to be decided before the Easter vacation, thus enabling the bulk of the allocation procedure to proceed without wastage of time during the vacation period."

Report of Officers' Panel held 19.11.56 to Officers' Meeting on 14.12.56. (File 3).

The Panel had once more considered the timetable, because teachers continually sought an earlier date for notification of results to parents and later date for tests. The Panel appreciated that present arrangements, particularly in relation to marginal pupils, were considerably hampered until fee-paying placements were decided. If tests were held in mid-March, these schools could not deal with applications before Easter, and therefore tests are in February.

(Footnote continued on page 176).

Footnote 1 continued from page 175:

Report of Officers' Panel held 15.6.60 to Officers' Meeting on 17.6.60. (File 2).

Local selection panels were to be asked to come to a firm decision by the end of February 1961 on the assessment of pupils who have given an independent or direct grant school as first choice. (In 1960 the formal eleven plus test procedure was superceded by an assessment of each pupil by a selection panel, and only pupils assessed 'record card grammar' were eligible for fee-paying school places.)

(d) How Procedure was Changed

Until the eleven plus examination became a political issue, and the Labour-controlled County Council decided in 1958 to change the selection procedure, this aspect of the education service was very much the preserve of officers on the one hand and teachers on the other. The Officers' Meeting established in 1946 a small Sub-Committee of four Education Officers, which became known as the Officers' Panel on Secondary Selection and Allocation. It reported back to the Officers' Meeting. The Teachers' Panel of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) also established a Sub-Committee known as the Joint Twenty (ten primary and ten secondary teachers), which was concerned with the improvement of secondary selection. It reported to the Teachers' Panel. From time to time a few Joint Twenty representatives formed a Working Party with members of the Officers' Panel, and on this the County's Educational Psychologists would also be represented. Indeed, the County's Chief Educational Psychologist was involved in informal discussions with both officers and teacher representatives from time to time.

A grammar school teacher who had served on the Joint Twenty said of the Working Parties that elected members were deliberately kept out because "they had no idea what we were talking about."¹ Evidently details of selection and allocation were regarded as a matter for the experts. Reports of a Working Party would go to the JCC on the one hand and the relevant Sub-Committee of the Education Committee on the other. On an administrative matter, the Sub-Committee concerned would simply be informed before action was taken, but on a policy matter the Education Committee would have to give a ruling.

It must often have been difficult to distinguish between an administrative and a policy matter. With reference to eleven plus

1. Interview: Mr. Finch.

selection, it might be argued that the decision whether to have selection or not was a policy issue, whereas how selection was best to be conducted was an administrative one. Yet in practice there was no rigid boundary between the two. In 1958 when the Labour controlled County Council was unable to abolish selection it made a policy decision that the method of selection must be changed. Officers and teachers then had to work out a new procedure, which the Committee later approved¹.

Before dealing in some detail with the abolition of the formal eleven plus examination, in which elected members forced the pace, some examples will be given of other changes in selection procedure. Changes were usually introduced in response to specific criticisms or as a result of research, especially into the best ways of selecting marginal pupils.

It was the Panel of Officers which proposed the creation of five geographical zones in 1947, so that grammar school places could be pooled within these zones in the hope of achieving a better distribution. This change involved officers in cooperation every year in allocating selective places in the grammar schools of their zone. As was shown earlier, this system did not always function as envisaged.

The type of tests used, the working out of age correlation scales, the weighting given to the IQ test, the pass mark, the timetable and marginal procedure were all matters which were discussed between officers and teachers. Ideas for improvements in procedure came also from various individuals working in the education service. A headmaster evolved a scheme by which primary school gradings of eleven-year olds were given standardised numerical equivalents, and this method was used by many Divisional Executives in considering marginal cases. The HMI, concerned about the backwash effect of coaching on the primary schools, suggested double weighting for the IQ test in calculating children's scores, and this was done for a few years².

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1. The overlap between administrative and policy issues may be illustrated also on a point of detail. In 1949 the CEO suggested that only children who reached the County qualifying standard should be eligible for consideration for an LEA place at a fee-paying school. In this case he asked for a Committee ruling, so presumably this was a matter of policy. On the other hand, the inclusion or deletion of names of particular schools on Form AS2 was in 1960 regarded as an administrative matter, although it was thought to influence whether parents would name a fee-paying school as their first preference.
 2. SchsSC/13/13.12.55, p.41, CEO's Report.

Apart from experiment by officers and teachers in different parts of the County, in 1951 the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) were granted facilities in Twickenham for enquiring into allocation arrangements. The short-term aim was to examine the working of the testing machinery and to suggest improvements. The long-term object was an appraisal of the efficiency of selection in terms of progress made by children in secondary schools. The interim findings confirmed

"that from a statistical standpoint, the forecasts made of a child's abilities and aptitudes under the Committee's arrangements possess a remarkable degree of accuracy."¹

A panel in Twickenham of two teachers and two officers had in 1953 decided to use head teachers' assessments, scaled by methods suggested by NFER, for considering border-line cases. Primary teachers were gaining experience in drawing up orders of merit preceding the tests².

In another Borough teachers and officers were exploring the possibility that school record cards might be used as a substitute for the eleven plus examination. But in the mid-fifties, when the CEO reported fully on the County's selection procedure to the Schools Sub-Committee, he concluded that it was not at that stage possible radically to change the selection system without impairing standards of efficiency. Teachers still had too little experience in the use and interpretation of the record card and therefore no even standard of assessment between school and school would be possible³.

From time to time, teachers expressed some anxiety about the use of the record card instead of the standardised tests for selection at eleven plus. Teachers who were interviewed by the writer all agreed that consultation of teachers over the introduction and detailed lay-out of the record card was full and frank⁴. But teachers were divided and not

1. SchsSC/13/13.12.55, p.41, CEO's Report.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. For example, teachers did not want the father's occupation shown on the record card, and this was not done on the card examined (probably an early 1960 example). Information obtained from Mr. Finch, grammar school teacher. Presumably this was to avoid social bias when the record of a child was scrutinised by selection panels.

always in wholehearted support of the use of record cards. In 1957, an NUT member, who was Secretary of the Teachers' Panel of the JCC, gave a full report to NUT members on a meeting of the JCC held in February 1957.¹ The Schools Sub-Committee had accepted the view of the Officer-Teacher Working Party that the record card was of great value in dealing with transfers of border-zone pupils, and had invited the views of the JCC on its general adoption. At the JCC it was pointed out that the use of the card had been under discussion for ten years and that its present form had evolved from amendments requested by teachers. Regret was expressed that in spite of this less use was being made of the card and no fresh constructive ideas were being submitted by teachers.

"It should be noted that your representatives were placed in an embarrassing position for they have constantly pressed that the Head's assessments should be a valued aid to selection. Yet the reduced use of the card suggests that Heads put more faith in the examination."²

The JCC therefore wished to draw head teachers attention to the unanimous opinion of the Working Party

"That the Use of the 'Agreed Record Card' in the Junior Schools is Highly Desirable."³

Not long after this, an Officers' Meeting decided to recommend that the record card be used in all primary schools latest in the year 1958/9⁴. At a meeting of the Officers' Panel shortly before⁵, it was made clear that officers now desired some uniformity in the procedure for marginal candidates. The diversified arrangements should be replaced by the primary head teachers' assessment as recommended in the NFER Third Interim Report on Twickenham. Such a scheme had worked well in another Middlesex Borough.

The following year the CEO informed the Schools Sub-Committee that the technique for selection of marginal pupils (who made up 27.12% of

1. 916/17/27.5.57. Report of JCC meeting held 12.2.57.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. File 3. Officers' Meeting, 12.7.57.

5. File 3. Officers' Panel Meeting, 20.5.57.

all grammar school entrants in 1958) had been changed. After twelve years of research by teachers, psychologists and officers, it was recognised that the record card was essential in considering border-zone children, and local selection panels had so used the card in making the 1958 allocations¹.

The CEO's Report added, however, that any revolutionary change in selection procedure, like abolition of written tests, would incur the risk of reduced efficiency of selection.

"There would undoubtedly be a lower degree of objectivity and, since so much would depend on the recommendations of the teachers, school staffs would be exposed without adequate safeguards to parental pressure and even the allegation and temptation of favouritism."²

Some LEAs had abolished the eleven plus test because of national pressure. But on closer scrutiny, most of the new LEA schemes were merely a re-arrangement of the old testing process, and apart from the 'novelty' value, did little or nothing to alter basic procedure.

This Report was submitted to the Schools Sub-Committee in September 1958. Had the CEO no premonition that within one month his own Authority would decide to abolish the eleven plus? Perhaps the new Middlesex selection procedure, which the officers were required to evolve and which came into use in 1960, was merely a re-arrangement of the old process with some 'novelty' value. Apparently primary heads in four different zones were known to be saying after the change:

"... do not let us kid ourselves, we have still got the eleven plus."³

But to begin at the beginning. In October 1958 the Middlesex County Council, by 59 to 49 votes, decided that

"The County Council is of the opinion that ... the present selection at the age of eleven plus should be abolished as soon as alternative arrangements can be made."⁴

1. SchsSC/18/23.9.58, p.77, CEO's Report.

2. Ibid.

3. Interview: Mr. Finch.

4. MCC Repts/1958. Summary of Proceedings 29.10.58, p.38. (Voting figures from CEO's Report to SchsSC/19/18.11.58, p.29).

Having in September argued against abolition of written tests, the CEO in November¹ had to play a rather different tune, or at least to place the emphasis elsewhere. He held that the criticisms made called into question the general system of the organisation of secondary education. While much of the criticism of eleven plus selection

"is emotional and personal, it may be agreed that experience of the selection arrangements common to most Authorities ... has revealed a number of basic limitations. ... it is desirable to set out .. the most serious of these limitations...

- "(1) Decisions of paramount importance to parents may largely depend on the assessment of a child's ability at the early age of eleven.
- (2) No selection process, no matter how carefully devised, can result in a prognosis which can be guaranteed as reliable over a period of up to 4 or 5 years.
- (3) The result of a mistaken prognosis may be to withhold educational facilities which the child may require at a later stage of development.
- (4) The effect of the publicity continuously directed on this problem has been to surround the selection procedure with an atmosphere of crisis which it seems now impossible to dissipate, save by drastic change.
- (5) The importance generally attached to the results of the selection procedure has produced an unhappy effect on the work of primary schools."

What, in particular, were the weaknesses of the Middlesex selection system?

"It is undeniably true that some parents and children are adversely affected emotionally by the nature of the exam and it must be agreed that the competitive aspects of the tests have had a malign effect on the curriculum of the junior school. Moreover .. there is a minority of pupils ... who have been wrongly placed or who have developed on unexpected lines."

And its merits?

"The tests ... are as fair and produce results as objective as the most scrupulous care can make them."

The Committee's problem, therefore, was

"to arrive at some method of assessment which will impose less strain upon the nervous child or parent and which will provide

1. SchsSC/19/18.11.58, p.29, CEO's Report. Several quotes follow from this Report.

opportunities for revision of assessment, but which at the same time will retain the objectivity, efficiency and accuracy of the present system."

The CEO's recommendation to the Schools Sub-Committee was threefold:

- "1. The abandonment of the present formal County Tests on two consecutive days...
2. The extension of record card procedure."

The record card included results of tests taken in the junior school over several years, as well as teachers' comments. Present tests were 'open', and in the fourth year these might well be replaced by 'closed' tests like those used in the County examination hitherto. But they would be administered as part of the ordinary school routine without publicity.

- "3. The extension of the work of selection panels to include the cases of all candidates for secondary selection rather than a limited marginal group."

Panels would be aware of parents' wishes and of teachers' assessments. Cases where the views of the panel and of the parent differed would have to be reassessed. But ultimately the decision of the panel should determine the child's future schooling.

The CEO's Report also dwelt on the effect of changes in selection procedure on admission to fee-paying schools. Under the new procedure the distinction between fully and marginally qualified pupils for grammar school was likely to disappear. Hitherto only fully qualified candidates had been eligible for consideration for free and assisted places at fee-paying schools. This matter would require the Committee's attention once the main issues had been settled.

It is of interest that one Divisional Executive wanted to run a pilot experiment. It asked permission - which was not granted - to select its 1959 grammar school entrants without use of the formal examination. Unlike some other areas, this one had only a very small proportion of children attending independent schools. The proposed 'pilot' experiment would therefore have provided no solution to the problem of entry into fee-paying schools after the abolition of the eleven plus examination. The CEO thought difficulties and misunderstandings were likely to arise if such a scheme were introduced before the

final decision had been made about the general scheme.

"There would certainly be the risk of treatment which was inequitable in regard to the award of free places at the direct grant and independent schools."¹

After consideration of the Report, the Schools Sub-Committee instructed the CEO to prepare and submit a detailed scheme for amending selection procedure as from 1960². This task fell to the Officers' Panel, in consultation with teachers and others. Three months later, the proposals which emerged were embodied in the CEO's Report to the Schools Sub-Committee³.

The process of consultation and discussion included the following:

A meeting of the Officers' Panel was the first of a series of meetings. The CEO's Report to the Schools Sub-Committee was placed before this meeting, and detailed points were made about the proposed changes. With reference to fee-paying schools, it was proposed that free places at independent schools should in future be available for the whole of Middlesex. This required a decision as to whether it was necessary

"to review the position of zone 1 children, hitherto eligible to be considered for assisted places only."

Written in pencil against this item on the office copy of the Agenda were the two words "drop quietly".⁴

Second, the CEO requested Divisional Executives to submit their views on selection at eleven. Hendon and Twickenham declared themselves opposed to change in the procedure. One Education Officer had consulted the heads of schools in his Borough before his Divisional Executive met.

1. SchsSC/19/18.11.58, p.29.

2. Ibid., p.35.

3. SchsSC/20/24.2.59, p.23.

4. File 2. Officers' Panel, 28.11.58. In the following year this matter was reported to the SchsSC/21/22.9.59, p.62, CEO's Report. "With the introduction of the new arrangements in 1960, this limitation has been withdrawn". There was no explanation for this decision, but the Sub-Committee accepted it. The reason why zone 1 children had originally been precluded from free places was that in 1951 the area had no shortage of maintained grammar school places, a situation which had not changed.

A Memorandum indicated the high proportion of parents who at present expressed a preference for grammar school. He thought these preferences might be substantially altered if individual parents were consulted before completing form AS2, especially if the improvements in modern schools were fully explained¹.

Third, there was a meeting of the Educational Psychologists' Panel. This Panel of five psychologists recommended that IFER closed tests be used in future, in preference to Moray House tests. The latter had been used under the old selection procedure and

"The Panel felt that every effort should be made to get away from the idea that the new procedure is merely the old one driven underground, in so far as this can be done without too much sacrifice of reliability and validity in the final selection."

"Since it is possible that there will be some loss of reliability in the new procedure, the need for a freer and easier transfer procedure between secondary schools is stressed."²

A County officer wrote a comment under this report "Teachers say doubtful child does not know what MH is..³

Fourthly, Education Officers, Psychologists and Teachers held a Joint Meeting at which a Report from the Officers' Panel meeting was considered. Here it was agreed that for the maintained grammar schools the essentials of the present system should be preserved, except that selection panels would pass on to schools gradings like 'Record Card Grammar' (or A) and 'Record Card Grammar Marginal' (or B). As regards free places at independent schools, these were to be available for all Middlesex children, including those from zone 1. Only children graded 'A' or similarly by selection panels were to be eligible for consideration. It was also agreed that the need for these supplementary places be reviewed as soon as practicable⁴.

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1. File 2. Answers and Documents received by CEO, December 1958, including Memo dated 2.12.58.
 2. File 2. Meeting of Educational Psychologists' Panel, 10.12.58.
 3. Ibid. M.H. = Moray House.
 4. File 2. Joint Meeting held 18.12.58. The review of places taken in fee-paying schools is dealt with fully in Part III of the thesis, especially Chapter 8(b).

Fifthly, the Teachers' Panel of the Joint Consultative Committee circulated a questionnaire to all Middlesex teachers which asked¹

"Do you favour any change in present selection procedure during interim period?"

4,630 out of 11,578 teachers (40%) returned the questionnaire, and of those who answered, 60% opposed and 40% supported change. The Education Committee was asked to bear this body of opinion in mind and to consult the Teachers' Panel in due course.

A senior officer explained that the eleven plus was abolished against teacher opposition; many teachers were reluctant - and some a bit ashamed of their reluctance - to accept that entry to grammar school would depend more on head teachers' assessment than on the tests. Teachers in place of officers would then become subject to parental pressure².

In due course the CEO informed the Schools Sub-Committee that the Panel of Officers was acting on the assumption that the County Council, in abolishing the formal eleven plus test, did not wish to deviate from

"the principle of selection or guidance at the age of transfer...";
 "... no matter how secondary education may be organised, it will always require a substantial element of selection if justice is to be done to the varying needs of individual children."³

The Panel had consulted representatives of psychologists and teachers; had examined a number of schemes from Divisional Executives, psychologists and teachers; and had studied results of the questionnaire to Middlesex teachers. It agreed with the view of teachers that any revision of selection procedure "might fail to maintain the reliability of judgments made." In its proposals the Panel therefore sought to

- a) preserve the praiseworthy features of the existing scheme;
- b) eliminate the 'occasion' impact of the County tests with its emotional influences;
- c) make the primary school record the main determinant in allocations to appropriate courses.

1. File 1. Letter to CEO, 10.11.58.

2. Interview: Miss Trout.

3. SchsSC/20/24.2.59, p.23, CEO's Report.

The proposed new procedure was set out in great detail in the CEO's Report.

Subsequent to acceptance by the Schools Sub-Committee, these proposals were put early in March to the Advisory Committee and agreed, and to the Joint Consultative Committee. The Teachers' Panel of the JCC, without questioning the Committee's policy, did express certain reservations. Teachers doubted whether record cards were universally used in primary schools; they were anxious lest consultation with parents would be productive of certain difficulties; and they were concerned that closed tests were not to be administered on the same date in all schools¹.

Despite these hesitations, the Education Committee² and then the County Council³ agreed the new procedure for selection at eleven. It would be based on use of the school record card. Results of tests would be shown on the card along with the head teacher's assessment and the parents' choice. The formal eleven plus tests would be discontinued, but as a standard of comparison between different schools 'closed' tests would still be taken as part of the ordinary school routine. Local selection panels composed of head teachers of each type of school and the educational psychologist would work under the guidance of Education Officers. Their decision on allocation would be subject to appeal by head teachers and parents.

The decision taken, the new procedure had to be introduced. As far as the fee-paying schools were concerned, Education Officers were informed that security arrangements had to be made for the taking of closed tests. Where the Middlesex Record Card was used, the tests could be taken at the school but had to be administered by the LEA educational psychologist or a representative of the Education Officer, who should arrange for marking of scripts. In other cases, testing centres would have to be arranged towards the end of the Christmas vacation⁴

1. EC/112/9.3.59, p.55.

2. Ibid.

3. On 25.3.59.

4. File 2. Officers' Meeting, 24.4.59.

In May, the heads of those fee-paying schools taking Middlesex-sponsored pupils were invited to meet the CEO in order that the new procedure might be explained. In the past the preparatory or junior departments of these schools had entered their pupils for the County tests, and for LEA-financed places in their upper school. The CEO and his staff therefore explained that the three closed tests would in future not be taken on a fixed day, but as part of the ordinary school routine late in the autumn term. The heads were asked to arrange dates for testing their own junior children with the local Education Officer or with the Central Department, according to previous practice.

Qualified pupils would still have a mark, and heads would receive names of candidates for admission by February. By the end of the spring term the County Education Department needed to know names of accepted candidates.

The heads discussed the record card, which many had not seen before. They were informed that it would be helpful if their preparatory departments would use the Middlesex record card. The CEO also explained the constitution of the local assessment panels¹.

Of the fee-paying schools it was evidently the six direct grant schools and one or two independent ones which made arrangements with the Central Office of the Middlesex Education Department for the testing of their junior pupils. A Central Office Selection Panel, of three senior officers and the County educational psychologist would assess these pupils. The schools were to submit an order of merit in the same way as primary school head teachers did, and heads were to discuss with the officers concerned any cases on which either side was doubtful².

During the summer of 1959, representatives of the Joint Twenty discussed with Central Office the type of closed tests to be used under the new selection procedure. A gloss would be prepared to help teachers with the administration and marking of the tests³.

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1. File 2. Notes on Meeting with heads of independent schools, 28.5.59.
 2. File 2. Notes on discussion between three County officers and County educational psychologist, 6.8.59.
 3. File 1. Informal Meeting between two representatives of Joint Twenty and County educational psychologist and senior officer, 21.7.59.

During 1959-60 experience must have been gained in working the new procedure. In the summer of 1960, an ad hoc panel of the County Psychologist, one Divisional Education Officer and one teacher from the Joint Twenty was established on the suggestion of the Officers' Panel. The ad hoc panel would examine test material in detail and prepare a gloss for the guidance of local selection panels. Selection panels were to be asked to make a firm decision by the end of February on the assessment of pupils who gave a fee-paying school as a first choice¹.

In the autumn the Officers' Panel took note of the precise composition of local selection panels throughout Middlesex. It was agreed that teacher members should in all cases be head teachers rather than assistants².

Despite the cynical view that the abolition of the formal eleven plus and its replacement by a more informal selection procedure only resulted in the eleven plus being driven underground³, most of those interviewed thought that the change was for the better.

"It was a genuine attempt to relieve anxiety. Some parents might feel the new procedure was not quite as vicious as before. Some would be converted by primary head. The children would be far better off. There was an element of relief. Nothing like it."⁴
(grammar school teacher).

"It was a change of substance. Greater weight was given to the child who had good parental support. The NFER enquiry in Twickenham had found that whether children placed in grammar schools were still attending five years later depended very much on parental support. Some might say that this method was unfair - but then what compensation can one give to a child from a poor home background."⁵ (Divisional Education Officer).

"The abolition of the eleven plus was not the abolition of selection. But it was a real attempt to mitigate tension for children and parents."⁶ (leading Labour County Councillor).

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1. File 2. Officers' Meeting, 17.6.60. Report of Officers' Panel 13.6.60.
 3. Expressed by Mrs. Crane, and said to be the view of primary heads in other areas, see page 181.
 2. File 2. Officers' Panel, 10.10.60.
 4. Interview: Mr. Finch.
 5. Interview: Mr. Whale.
 6. Interview: Cr. Mrs. Beech.

(e) Appendix: Short Case Study of Changes made in Form AS2, with
Special Reference to Parental Choice

Every year the Middlesex Education Department printed Form AS2 which gave parents of children in their last year at the primary school details of the selection procedure. It was on this form that parents stated their choices of secondary school. Parents were informed that

"Every effort will be made to give you your choice, provided the panel is agreed on the question of suitability and provided there is room in the school you choose."¹

The importance attached to parental choice at the age of transfer to secondary school is apparent from much of the material in this thesis. In the next chapter it is related how the attempt to establish comprehensive schools within a selective system involved the County Council in taking Counsel's Opinion on the rights of parents. Part III of the thesis illustrates the influence of parents on the LEA's policy towards the fee-paying schools.

It seems likely that for the majority of parents Form AS2 provided the one authoritative source of information on transfer to secondary school, beyond what teachers in the primary school told them. It is therefore of some interest how and why changes in this Form were made. Such changes were considered an administrative matter, and the contents of the Form seem to have been reviewed annually by the Officers' Panel responsible for Secondary Selection and Allocation.

Some references were found in the Middlesex records going back to the early 1950s. At that time there was, apparently, no choice of secondary modern school, whilst there was a wide one for grammar school. Gradually as conditions improved, some choice of modern school was given to parents within their Borough, whilst for grammar school the choice remained very much wider.

The following extracts from Minutes of the Officers' Panel² concerning

1. MCC. EC. Form AS2, 1960 and 1963.
2. File 3.

Form AS2 illustrate this development. It should also be noted that parents were at times given information, at other times they could ask for information. Clearly only parents with considerable initiative were likely to do the latter:

Meeting of Officers' Panel and Representatives of Joint Twenty.
24.10.51.

Attention was drawn to press criticisms of the omission of secondary modern schools from the form, which restricted parental choice for these pupils. It was suggested that this gap could be filled if each Divisional Executive circulated a list of modern schools in its own area as an addendum to the form.

"The Panel is of the opinion that it would be impracticable to do this at present as catchment areas are in operation for most secondary modern schools and it could only lead to the further complication of an already difficult problem. It was accordingly recommended that details of secondary modern schools should not be included, but that an appropriate reference should be incorporated in Form AS2 advising parents to apply to the Divisional Executive where they have strong preference for a particular modern school."

Meeting of Officers' Panel. 9.10.52.

The suggestion had been made that Form AS2 might be of a 'skeleton' type to allow for local variation. Consideration was given to the possibility that

- (i) AS2 be prepared locally, combining general information with details of schools available in each area;
- (ii) AS2 be prepared centrally giving general information, details of all schools providing grammar school courses, and a complete list of local Education Officers. Divisional Executives would have discretion to prepare a supplement giving local information.

Panel agreed (i) would in principle be preferable but was impracticable at present.

".. each area would need to include details of grammar schools outside the immediate locality as placings are dealt with on a zonal and inter-zonal basis.."

It was therefore recommended that AS2 should continue to be prepared centrally, and that

"local supplements should be prepared and inserted where this is considered desirable."

Meetings of Officers' Panel. 17.7.53 and 20.7.53.

It was noted that six areas had circulated supplements with the Form, giving details of local secondary modern provision. Consideration was given to the possibility of issuing

"a comprehensive statement giving fuller details of courses in Secondary Modern Schools throughout the County."

In view of the great variation in secondary modern provision in the County, the Panel thought information should be issued locally

".. and hoped that as conditions permitted, all local Education Officers would provide parents with full details of facilities provided in the Modern Schools.."

No year by year comparison of Form AS2 was undertaken over the period as a whole. Forms used in 1958, 1960 and 1963 were examined, and a comparison has been made between them on certain points in the table which follows below. That parents were asked to list three grammar, and later also three modern schools in order of preference, was stated earlier in this chapter.

Officers tried to influence parental choice by changes in the printed form. In the earlier years the evidence shows that parental choice was gradually widened by including information about the modern schools. From 1960 onwards parents were in addition asked to state preference for type of course in more detail. This was made possible by the development of five-year courses at the modern schools. But in these later years officers also changed the form in an attempt to curtail parental choice. The way in which schools were listed (or not listed at all) was thought to influence choice. Officers were intent on reducing parental preference for the fee-paying schools. The following extracts from the Minutes of the Officers' Panel¹ illustrate the various changes considered by officers in 1960:

Meeting of Officers' Panel. 13.6.60.

The Panel recommended that instead of asking parents whether they preferred a grammar or modern course, they should in future be asked their preference between a Basic 4-year course, an

1. File 2.

Extended 5 or 6-year course or an Intensive 7-year academic course. It was also recommended that a paragraph be inserted in the Form about maintenance grants to assist keeping children at school after the age of 15.¹

On the fee-paying schools it was recommended that, if possible, Form AS2 should include a warning of the possible dangers of selecting an independent school.

Meeting of Officers' Panel. 10.10.60.

After a lengthy discussion on free and assisted places taken at fee-paying schools, a senior officer said the

"question of the inclusion or deletion of individual schools from AS2 was an administrative arrangement and undertook to look into the matter. It was finally agreed that the whole question should be looked at again when the lay-out of Form AS2 was reviewed next year with the object of 'playing down' the availability of places at Independent, Direct Grant and Out-County Schools."

Two notes were attached to these minutes. One stated that when reporting to the full Officers' Meeting "guarded reference" should be made to the item concerning places at independent, direct grant and out-County schools.

The other asked

"What about revision of AS2 with a view to reducing interest in independent and out-County schools?"

(For table comparing Form AS2 in three different years, see overleaf, pp. 194-196)

1. The 1963 Form referred to maintenance grants for children over 15.

Table

Comparison of Form AS2 in three Different Years

1958	1960	1963																								
<p><u>Question 6 on Application Form</u></p> <p>What type of Course would you prefer your child to attend, Grammar or Modern?</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>Which type of course would you prefer your child to attend:-</p> <p>Mark X</p> <p>Basic 4-yr.secondary course <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Extended secondary course of:-</p> <p>5 years <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>More than 5 years <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Intensive 7-year academic course <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>How long do you plan at present to keep your child at school?</p> <p>Mark X</p> <p>(a) For basic 4-yr.course <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>(b) For extended course of 5 or 6 yrs, leading if suitable to external exams <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>(c) For full academic course of 7 years <input type="checkbox"/></p>																								
<p><u>Question 7 on Application Form</u></p> <p>So that consideration can be given to your wishes, list schools (grammar and modern) you prefer</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>Pref.</th> <th>Grammar</th> <th>Modern</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>.....</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>.....</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>.....</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>NB. You are strongly advised not to include more than one direct grant or independent school in your list.</p> <p>If you have special reasons for your choice, such as pref. for certain religious denomination, for single-sex or mixed school, convenience of access, family associations or medical reasons, please state here.¹</p> <p>.....</p>	Pref.	Grammar	Modern	1	2	3	<p>So that consideration may be given to your wishes list under each heading schools you prefer:-</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Basic/ Extended Course</th> <th>Intensive 7-year Course</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1st Pref.</td> <td>.....</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2nd "</td> <td>.....</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3rd "</td> <td>.....</td> <td>.....</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>NB. You are strongly advised not to include more than one school from List C and/or List D.</p> <p>Same as 1958.</p>		Basic/ Extended Course	Intensive 7-year Course	1st Pref.	2nd "	3rd "	<p>So that consideration may be given to your wishes you are asked to fill up both sections (a) and (b) below (or if applicable section (c)).</p> <p>(a) 3 schools in order of pref. if child selected gram.school course. Should not include more than one Independent or Dt.Grant School.</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>(b) 3 schools in order of pref. if child selected modern school course.</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>(c) If, irrespective of Panel's assessment, you intend to make private arrangements, and are using selection procedure for information only, Mark X <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If you have any special reasons for your choice please state them below.</p> <p>.....</p>
Pref.	Grammar	Modern																								
1																								
2																								
3																								
	Basic/ Extended Course	Intensive 7-year Course																								
1st Pref.																								
2nd "																								
3rd "																								
<p><u>Question 8 on Application Form</u></p> <p>If you have included a school at which assisted places are available, do you wish your child to be considered for assisted place knowing you may be required to pay all or part of fees and other expenses, such as travelling?</p> <p>(Yes or No)</p>	<p>Same as 1958.</p>	<p>Same as 1958.</p>																								

1. These are the grounds on which parental preferences should be given weight according to the DES Manual of Guidance, Schools No.1, Choice of Schools, 1960, H.S.O (originally published 23.8.50). Note the omission of these grounds from AS2 Application Form in 1963. They were, however, still mentioned in the Form under the heading "How are Places Filled?"

Table (continued)

1958	1960	1963
<p><u>Information given on Form AS2 to Parents</u></p> <p>List of Schools attached.</p> <p>(a) Secondary Modern schools in your district</p> <p>(b) Sec.Comprehensive - if there is one it is listed.</p> <p>(c) Secondary Grammar:</p> <p>i) Middx.Maintained Grammar Schools. Likely to be most interested those near your home. These listed. Complete list Middx.maintained gram.schools is available from local Education Office.</p> <p>ii) Out-County, Direct Grant & Independent Schools. Middx.CC able help with arrangements for a few pupils at schools listed.</p>	<p>You are likely to be most interested in those schools reasonably accessible to your home - find these included in List A.</p> <p>Complete list Middx.maintained grammar schools is available from local Education Office.</p> <p>A number of places available at Out-County, Direct Grant & Independent Grammar schools. For explanation of arrangements see Lists B, C, D.</p>	<p>You are likely to be most interested in those schools reasonably accessible to your home, and will find these included in List A. If you wish to consider schools outside your immediate neighbourhood, will find List B useful.</p>
<p><u>Enclosed with Form AS2</u></p> <p>Local List of Modern and Grammar Schools.</p> <p><u>Listed on Form AS2</u></p> <p>LCC Out-County Schools</p> <p>Direct Grant Schools</p> <p>Independent Schools - Free Places</p> <p>Independent Schools - Assisted Places</p>	<p>List A: local grammar and modern schools.</p> <p>List B: LCC List</p> <p>List C: Direct Grant and Independent Schools at which Free Places available.</p> <p>List D: Assisted Places at Independent Schools.</p>	<p>List A: local grammar and modern schools.</p> <p>List B: Full List of Grammar and Comprehensive Schools at which Places available (listed under Boys, Girls & Mixed Schools in alphabetical order, including LCC, Direct Grant and Independent Schools together with all Middx. Maintained Grammar Schools).</p>
<p><u>Information given on Form AS2 to Parents Concerning LCC & Fee-Paying Schools</u></p> <p>LCC: Some places for suitably qualified children available at: (followed by List).</p> <p>Direct Grant: CC awards strictly limited no. free places to suitably qualified pupils. CC will not accept responsibility for fees of pupils offered places outside CC scheme. (followed by List).</p> <p>Independent: Strictly limited no. free places for suitably qualified children. Applications received on understanding Committee's decision re. eligibility final. Responsibility for free places only to extent necessary in order to "supplement the Council's own provision in maintained and direct grant schools." Areas of County mentioned where free places available, and where not. (followed by List).</p>	<p>LCC: Some places may be available for children suited to academic course. (followed by List B).</p> <p>Direct Grant & Independent Schools: CC awards strictly limited number free places. CC will not accept responsibility for fees of pupils offered places outside CC scheme. CC's decision final re. eligibility. Free places offered only to extent present necessary to supplement CC's provision in maintained schools, i.e. if suitable vacancies cannot be offered at maintained schools. (followed by List C).</p>	<p>At end of List B, Please Note: CC prepared consider award strictly limited no. free places at independent and direct grant schools included in list above. CC no responsibility places offered outside its own arrangements. CC's decision final re eligibility. Places offered only to extent necessary supplement provision maintained grammar schools, i.e. if suitable vacancies cannot be offered at maintained grammar school.</p> <p>You are asked to note that if you give one of these schools as 1st choice and fail to obtain a place, it may be difficult in view of time factor to meet your 2nd or 3rd choice owing to keen competition many maintained schools.</p>

Table (continued)

1958	1960	1963
<u>Information given to Parents (cont.)</u>		
<p><u>Independent:</u> Special circumstances, limited number pupils given financial assistance if suitably qualified and school listed as 1st preference.</p> <p>Examples of special circumstances: preference on denominational grounds, convenience access and avoidance traffic danger, family association (specify), special facilities at school, medical reasons.</p> <p>Education Committee's decision on eligibility final.</p> <p>Must list school 1st preference. If possible offer assisted place, no attempt will be made offer 2nd or 3rd preference.</p> <p>No free travel etc.</p> <p>Consult scale of aid. (followed by List).</p>	<p><u>Independent Schools:</u> Special circumstances, CC offer financial assistance limited number of pupils, if school listed as first preference.</p> <p>Examples of special circumstances:</p> <p>(same as 1958)</p> <p>(same as 1958)</p> <p>(same as 1958)</p> <p>(same as 1958)</p> <p>(same as 1958)</p> <p>(followed by List).</p>	<p>CC prepared in addition offer limited number "assisted" places to pupils suitable full academic course. Request assisted place would take precedence over any subsequent choice maintained place, unless contrary clearly indicated.</p> <p>Pupils not eligible free travel, reduced lunch charges, uniform or other grants unless full remission fees granted. Parents asked to read details scale assistance given below before seeking assisted place.</p>
<p><u>Scale of Aid for Assisted Places at Independent Schools</u></p> <p>Parents required contribute towards fees assessed as follows:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">£</p> <p>Gross Income all sources of applicant and family</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total 1.</p> <p>Deduct:</p> <p>Expenses: Rent, rates, mortgage, income tax, fares to work, superannuation, life insurance premiums to £26, National Insurance, other unavoidable expenses certain cases.</p> <p>Allowances:</p> <p>Husband & wife £180 (one parent only £110)</p> <p>Dependent children per child £ 60</p> <p>Housekeeper with full board £ 60</p> <p>Dependent Relative up to £ 50</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total 2.</p> <p>Net Income: Total 1 minus 2.</p> <p>One eighth net income will be annual amount to be contributed to school fees. CC will pay fees above this.</p>	<p>(same as 1958)</p>	<p>Parents contribution will be assessed as follows:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">£</p> <p>Gross income all sources</p> <p style="text-align: right;">x</p> <p>Deduct:</p> <p>Ground rent, mortgage interest of owner occupied house</p> <p>Dependants (other than child for whom assistance claimed, the applicant and wife)</p> <p>£100 for child up to 12 yrs. £125 " " from 12 to 15 yrs. £150 " " " 15 to 18 yrs. £170 for dependant over 18 yrs.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">y</p> <p>Net Income = x - y</p> <p>With net income £450 no contribution. After that, £2 per annum for each additional £25 of net income. CC pays balance.</p>

It should be noted in particular that the 1963 AS2 Form paid much less attention to the fee-paying schools. Their names and addresses were included in the same list as the maintained grammar schools, and the simple device of an asterisk was used to indicate the schools where free places were offered, or two asterisks for assisted places. At the end of this List B a fairly brief note explained the necessary details about the award of free or assisted places, followed by the scale of aid for assistance. In earlier years, the fee-paying schools and the LCC out-County maintained grammar schools were each listed separately, full details were given of the circumstances in which the award of an assisted place would be considered, and the Middlesex maintained grammar schools were not listed in the printed form. Those in the locality where the parent resided were included on the local list which accompanied the AS2 Form from the local Education Office; parents were told that a full list of Middlesex maintained grammar schools could be obtained from their Education Officer.

This must have been the way in which officers hoped to reduce "interest in independent and out-County schools", to which reference was made at the Meeting of the Officers' Panel held in October 1960 mentioned above.

(f) Conclusion

"No swan ever failed to get in"¹.

Middlesex had a system of selection for secondary education based on academic merit both before and after the 1944 Education Act. By national standards, provision of grammar school places was generous, but only the minority gained access to university, the teaching and other professions via the grammar schools. x

Middlesex had a proud history of offering opportunities to bright children. Between the wars changes in selection procedure had increasingly ensured that entry to grammar schools was by merit rather than by the parents' ability to pay fees².

The 1944 Education Act abolished fees and promised free secondary education for all. Hitherto secondary education had meant a grammar school education. The Act changed that. Children were to be educated according to their different ages, abilities and aptitudes, and an academic type education was not what suited every child. But all secondary schools, whether grammar or some other type, were to be given parity of status - this at least was the promise. ✓

What was the reality? This chapter on the selection procedure points to the existence of a hierarchy of schools, not to a plurality of types, each enjoying equality of status. The influence of history, and of contemporary attitudes shaped by that history, ensured that parity was neither seen to nor did in fact exist, despite genuine efforts to improve the modern schools.

The status hierarchy gave pride of place to those grammar schools which remained fee-paying schools when fees were abolished in most secondary schools in 1944. How else can one explain that the selection procedure ensured that the ablest children were placed in private schools?

1. Interview: Mr. Salmon (former CEO).

2. Middlesex claims to have been the first LEA to have introduced 100% 'special' places, i.e. places offered on merit followed by assessment of fees on a parental income scale. See Primary and Secondary Education in Middlesex 1900-65 by Dr. C.E. Gurr, CEO, p.37.

Direct grant and independent schools which admitted LEA-sponsored and financed pupils were given first pick among applicants who had achieved high enough scores in the County's selection tests. Thus the schools held in the highest esteem were given the opportunity to enhance their reputation by the honours which would undoubtedly be won by the cleverest children in the County. To secure an LEA place at a fee-paying school was the prize of prizes.

The second rung in the status hierarchy was made up by the maintained grammar schools. Children who had been rejected by heads of fee-paying schools were placed there along with others who had 'qualified' in the County tests, or who had been selected from among the doubtfuls as deserving the chance of proving themselves. The number of marginal recruits to the maintained grammar schools was usually a question of how many vacancies were left. Every available desk was filled, since the only alternative, a place in a modern school, was very much a second, or rather a third, best.

The base of the pyramid, then, was made up of the modern schools. Children who were not clever, the non-selected majority, had to go to these. It was an uphill struggle for schools whose recruits were eleven plus 'failures' to establish a reputation.

The hierarchical structure of the secondary schools system was associated with a series of ambivalent attitudes widely reflected among parents, teachers, officers and councillors alike. Whilst almost without exception the existing structure was accepted, when the fate of individual children was at stake, the logic of the structure was often resisted. These inconsistencies of view were probably not recognised by the majority of those concerned.

One reason for this may well have been that the assumptions which upheld the hierarchical school structure were often implicit rather than explicit. The practice of letting fee-paying school heads have the first pick of the ablest children was never questioned. Indeed, the very timetable of the selection procedure was determined by the tacit acceptance that places in fee-paying schools were prizes for the brightest

children. It was taken for granted that parents were given a wide choice of grammar school, but a wide choice of modern school was regarded as administratively impossible. Parents were notified of eleven plus success in larger envelopes, in the case of failure small cyclostyled letters were sent.

There is little evidence of organised pressure or opinion against the pyramid as such, except from the Labour Group. Labour councillors hoped to achieve parity for all secondary schools through their comprehensive school policy. Their insistence that the grammar schools be associated with comprehensive schemes from the beginning was an overt challenge to the status hierarchy. But in Labour ranks, as elsewhere, there were staunch supporters of the grammar schools, who often defended these schools as an avenue for talented working class children to make good. Nor were the Labour Group clear about the position of the fee-paying schools in the hierarchy. They accepted the system of LEA-sponsored free places in these schools because it seemed only right that able children should have access to these irrespective of their parents' ability to pay. Like everyone else, Labour people accepted that selection for these schools should be based on academic merit.

The fee-paying school heads no doubt liked a system which gave them the opportunity to cream a few of the County's ablest children. But they, too, had an ambivalent attitude. For LEA-financed pupils success in the County test was accepted as the yardstick for admission, whereas for private fee-payers this was regarded as either irrelevant or at least not crucial. Otherwise how can the admission of eleven plus 'failures' to fee-paying schools be explained. It amounted to admission by the back door through ability to pay.

Primary school teachers were in a real quandary. On the one hand many recognised the educational harm done by gearing their school to the eleven plus. They also knew that the test procedure was ultimately arbitrary. For these reasons some were staunch supporters of the comprehensive school system. On the other hand, working within a selective system they knew that gaining eleven plus passes and admissions to fee-paying and other grammar schools for their children improved the

status of their own school. Thus in practice they accepted the selection procedure and put their pupils through the eleven plus. Individual injustices could, after all, often be corrected. Increasingly the procedure allowed weight to be given to the head teacher's assessment, which left the door open for pressing individual 'doubtful' children into grammar school. On the other hand, the claimed objectivity of test results gave teachers and officers some protection against parental pressure. This was one reason that made teachers and officers so reluctant to abolish the 'objective' eleven plus tests despite awareness of the arbitrariness of any particular pass mark or dividing line.

The pyramid provided modern school places for the majority of children. Yet few parents opted for a modern school course. There was keen pressure to get to the top. The anxiety of parents and children alike for success in the eleven plus examination reflected the competitive pressures to get a grammar school place, if possible at a fee-paying school. Whilst accepting the selective school structure, some parents - particularly middle-class parents - refused to accept its implications when their own child's future was at stake. No 'objective' test could convince them of the 'failure' of their child. If they were able to do so, such parents often opted out of the state sector and sent their children to fee-paying schools under their own arrangements. It is known that these 'opted out' children often achieved good 'O' and 'A' level results.

Officers were keenly aware of parental pressures within the school system. They tried to counteract this as best they could. A child 'rejected' for grammar school was not a child who had 'failed'. The letter to parents in 1963 claimed that

"the transfer arrangements are no longer just a competitive examination to get into the grammar schools irrespective of whether or not the grammar school course is the one most suited to a particular child..."¹

It is a fact that once the modern schools were offering pupils opportunities to sit for GCE examinations, parents came to accept a modern school

1. Form AS2, 1963.

place a little more readily. Did this mean that the elusive concept of 'parity' was within reach after all?

The pressures might be less acute, but the pyramid still remained. Officers who on the one hand tried to persuade parents that the secondary modern school had equal status and offered equal opportunity, on the other hand demonstrated that in their eyes some schools were "more equal than others", to use Orwell's expression. They continued to fill every available grammar school desk, thus threatening the development of extended courses in the modern schools. Filling the 1,000 extra maintained grammar school places provided by the Authority meant that there was not enough ability left over for the modern school GCE 'O' level courses. Acceptance of academic selection and the allocation of the ablest to the higher status schools threatened the achievement of parity by the lower status ones. Officers were uneasily perched on the horns of a dilemma. But it was everyone's dilemma.

One way of dealing with a dilemma is to face it squarely and make a choice. But that is easier said than done. Too few people were as yet prepared to accept that gross inequalities persisted in the field of secondary education twenty years after the 1944 Act. Criticism of the eleven plus procedure, however, was symptomatic of a growing awareness of the real ailment. Perhaps officers and councillors were dimly aware that parents and teachers would be incensed if the stark truth were known. Whatever the reason, they kept the facts to themselves. The zonal statistics showing the percentage of eleven plus passes and of grammar school placements were shrouded in secrecy. Teacher representatives were not given these figures. After all, they might have leaked to some thousands of teachers. One is left to speculate what was feared most: the wrath of parents in high ability areas who would have realised how much harder it was for their children to gain admission to grammar schools; or the wrath of parents in low ability areas who could not be expected to accept that their children were less able. Another aspect of this secrecy was that primary head teachers were not permitted to publicise their eleven plus successes. No league table of primary schools was to be available for the interested parent. In other words, essential

facts about the actual working of the competitive system were kept hidden.

Despite this, criticism mounted. Educational opinion became less sure about the objective validity of the eleven plus tests. The increasing evidence from sociologists and others laid bare what was suspected: the correlation between social class and educational attainment. As public criticism of the eleven plus mounted, something was done to ease the situation for the nervous child and parent. But this was a palliative and did not go to the root of the inequalities embedded in secondary school organisation. Gradually a wider public opinion became aware of the deeper issue and this contributed, in due course, to shaping new attitudes on the whole structure of our school system.

It was perhaps not a coincidence that teachers and officers, forced by their elected representatives to survey selection procedures more critically, after a time became aware of some of the problems of maintained grammar schools, which suffered from creaming by the fee-paying schools, and of the modern schools, which suffered from creaming by the maintained grammar schools. No one wanted to be a Cinderella. The question as to whether these problems could be solved within the existing status hierarchy of schools could no longer be ignored.

Chapter 6Case Studies of Early Comprehensive Proposalsby Labour County CouncilIntroductory

When the Labour-controlled County Council in July 1946 endorsed the CEO's Report on The Organisation of Secondary Education which outlined a short- and a long-term policy, there was no recorded opposition against the adoption of the comprehensive school as the favoured type for the pattern of the future. Some controversy there had been: over the proposed size of comprehensive schools - the County Council deciding in favour of small ones of 4, 5 or 6 form-entry - and over the position of the existing grammar schools during the short-term. It is the latter point which is particularly relevant for the case studies which follow. At Sub-Committee level, the CEO's proposal that existing grammar schools be given the option to contract out in the short-term was defeated because the Sub-Committee felt that grammar schools should be identified with the new comprehensive schools from the start¹.

Once general policy was settled, two further steps were taken. The Divisional Executives in the County were asked to submit their draft proposals for inclusion in the County's Development Plan for Primary and Secondary Education. At this stage some opposition became evident against the adopted policy. Two areas - Twickenham and Enfield - flatly refused to submit comprehensive proposals. In addition, the County

1. SESC/5/22.7.46. Joint Meeting SESC and EDSC. Page 47.

Council itself initiated moves to establish at an early date a few comprehensive schools, and it is this initiative which will be studied in this chapter. These first comprehensive schools were to be started in September 1948, before the Minister of Education had yet expressed an opinion on the County's overall Development Plan, submitted to him only in April of that year. Nevertheless, the Minister did approve initially two and under pressure three comprehensive schools to be started in 1948.

Once the establishment of some comprehensive schools in the immediate future was on the agenda, opposition mounted¹. It was greatest in that area of the County where an existing grammar school was to be incorporated in a comprehensive unit with a newly built secondary modern. Just as the CEO's proposal that grammar schools be allowed to opt out of comprehensive schemes in the short-term had been squashed at Sub-Committee level, so now the Secondary Education Sub-Committee considered that at least one grammar school should be included in this first round. Keats School, a County Grammar School in the South West Middlesex Divisional Executive area, came to be the chosen grammar school, and although eventually dropped, this proposal will be taken for one of the case studies. By doing so it will be possible to examine the opposition to the County Council's comprehensive school policy at its fiercest.

The other case study, chosen for a number of reasons, will be of the proposal to turn Blake School, a secondary modern, into a comprehensive school. Whereas it was intended to turn the only existing grammar school in the first area into part of a comprehensive unit, the second area had no grammar school. Children qualifying for a grammar school place had to be sent some distance to neighbouring areas or attend the local secondary modern. In this respect there is striking contrast between the initial secondary school position of the two areas, and it is perhaps not surprising that the grammar school proposal failed whereas the secondary modern one succeeded to be carried through.

1. Throughout the thesis the names of schools and local persons involved have been omitted. Schools frequently referred to have been given a fictitious name or a letter of the alphabet. Persons have been given a pseudonym. For details see Notes on page 6.

The Blake School¹ case study is, however, of added interest because opposition arose there also, although of serious dimensions only after the School had been running for some months as a comprehensive. It was then that parents became aware of the full implications of County Council policy. In future years children in the School's catchment area would not sit the eleven plus examination: in order to achieve a balanced intake the local comprehensive school would take all children of secondary school age.

Parents protested against compulsory attendance at the comprehensive school. They claimed their children should continue to enjoy the right to take the eleven plus examination and to attend grammar schools in other parts of Middlesex if they qualified. They quoted sections 68 and 76 of the Education Act and appealed to the County Council and to the Minister. Just as undoubtedly protests in South West Middlesex were crucial in the comprehensive school proposal for that area being dropped, so protests in the second area contributed to a reversal of the County Council's decision that children at primary schools in the three areas concerned would proceed to the comprehensive school as a matter of course. After the County Council had sought and received Counsel's Opinion on this whole matter, the right to be tested for grammar school suitability was restored to all children.

Both case studies therefore illustrate the difficulties encountered by the LEA in establishing comprehensive schools within a selective system. Whilst in South West Middlesex these difficulties killed the infant before birth, in the second area the infant saw the light of day and then conquered ensuing difficulties. The latter study covers a longer period of years because it is of interest to relate how the local people succeeded in preserving and extending the comprehensive school against considerable pressure after 1949 when the Conservatives had regained control of the County Council. In the 1950s, Conservatives at Guildhall were completely at loggerheads with local Conservatives over the fate

1. This case study involved also the Eliot School. In due course the Blake buildings became part of Eliot Comprehensive School.

of the secondary school there. It was the local people who won this battle, and the Eliot Comprehensive School is to this day the only secondary school in the area.

The Chapter naturally falls into four sections. Firstly, the County Council's decision to establish a few comprehensive schools in September 1948 must be documented. Here the attitude of the teachers in the County is also dealt with. Next, opposition to the proposal concerning Keats School in South West Middlesex will be examined. Thirdly, the establishment of Blake (later Eliot) Comprehensive School will be related as well as the difficulties which threatened its continued existence. Finally, some conclusions will be drawn from the two case studies. Extracts from certain local papers will be used to throw light on the attitudes prevailing among policy-makers at the time¹.

1. Where the name of schools appears in extracts quoted from local newspapers, the fictitious name has been substituted. For details see Notes, page 6.

(a) The County Council Decision to Establish Comprehensive Schools in September 1948.

The Middlesex Education Committee, after its meeting on 25th July, 1946, submitted to the County Council on 31st July, 1946, a Report on "The Future Organisation of Secondary Education in Middlesex"¹. In adopting this Report, the County Council accepted recommendations concerning long-term and short-term policy. A County-wide system of comprehensive secondary schools organised on a 4, 5 or 6 form-entry was to be planned, but it was recognised that the shortage of building-labour, materials and teachers would delay this long-term aim. Meanwhile, parents were to be informed of the County Council's intentions - a small pamphlet² was in due course circulated to parents of children about to enter secondary schools - and it was envisaged that early progress could be made in the following ways:

Some existing school buildings were large enough to house comprehensive schools provided present pupils could be redistributed; other buildings could be extended by the addition of huts; yet other schools in some districts could be grouped on an area basis. On new housing estates, schools built should be planned as 5 form-entry from the start. The grammar schools were to be identified with the new system so that the established values of the grammar school tradition would accrue to the new schools³.

For over a year no steps were taken to introduce comprehensive schools in the short-term. But in November 1947 the Education Development Sub-Committee considered the possibility of establishing one or more secondary comprehensive schools in September 1948⁴. The opinion was expressed that

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1. This Report was reproduced as Appendix III of the printed Development Plan for Primary and Secondary Education 1948.
 2. Middlesex County Council. The Comprehensive School, Guildhall, Westminster, S.W.1. May 1948.
 3. MCC. Dev.Plan, 1948, Appendix III, Section 8, pp.125-6.
 4. EDSC/IV/20.11.47, p.9.

"certain schools could be adapted to enable the intake of pupils of the age of eleven plus next September to be on a non-selective basis."

The CEO was asked by the Sub-Committee

"to examine certain schools to consider problems of staffing, accommodation, equipment and the existing secondary provision in the area ... and to report at an early date."

Thus from late November 1947 onwards the Officers of the County Council may have been turning over in their minds the names of actual schools.

In January 1948 the Secondary Education Sub-Committee envisaged three ways in which a small number of schools could be started as comprehensives in September¹. A secondary modern school could be extended in areas where there was inadequate grammar school provision; a group of existing schools could become a comprehensive unit for a definite catchment area; a grammar school could commence non-selective entry. The minute does not make it clear who suggested these different methods, but they are likely to have emerged through informal consultation between Officers and leading councillors². The same meeting recommended to the County Council that, subject to Ministry of Education approval, a small number of comprehensive schools should be established in September 1948 and that appropriate teaching appointments be made. Furthermore, it held that at least one grammar school should be included in this first scheme of reorganisation³.

When these Sub-Committee recommendations were submitted to the Education Committee in February, an amendment was moved by one of the Conservative Councillors to the effect that particular proposals for comprehensive schools would require the prior approval of the Divisional Executive concerned. This was defeated by 33 votes to 13⁴. The Labour members in effect insisted that the County Council was, according to one press account,

1. SESC/10/26.1.48, p.54-5.

2. Interview with Cr.Mrs. Beech, who was Chairman of the Education Committee at that date, and who thought she would have met with Chairman of SESC, CEO and Officer for Schools.

3. SESC/10/26.1.48, p.54-5.

4. EC/86/9.2.48, p.53.

"... the statutory authority to say what sort of schools should be established";

one Labour Alderman even described the Conservative amendment as

"a threat, tantamount to saying 'Do as we say or we won't play ball'."

The Chairman of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, however, gave an assurance that there would be consultation,

"... as far as he could say they would not choose an area where the committee were diametrically opposed to the scheme."¹

According to another report, however, he added

"I don't agree to getting their approval, but agree to getting their opinion'..."²

In seconding the amendment, a Conservative Councillor (Cr.Mrs.Deer) had said

"They all had something to learn. From this experiment, test or try-out they would be able to develop further the scheme for the County. 'This trial ... would have a much better chance of success if carried out in a district where the executive expresses agreement. We need the consent and goodwill of the Divisional Executives concerned'."³

Apparently the use of the word 'experiment' raised the ire of Labour members. Another Labour Alderman was brought

"to his feet. 'This is not an experiment, but the first instalment of a matter of policy passed by this Committee of the County Council'... 'If in every case of the setting up of a comprehensive school they had to get the agreement of the Divisional Executive concerned the delay would make the whole thing unworkable. There had been complaints and opposition to the scheme, but they were now going to make a beginning. They were not apologising, unless for the fact that they were late in making a start'."

When a Conservative Councillor for Twickenham, an area which had always been against the scheme, stated that it would be difficult both for Twickenham and the Minister if the Committee tried to get a comprehensive

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1. Surrey Comet, 11.2.48. The three extracts are from this source.
 2. Barnet Press, 14.2.48.
 3. Middlesex Chronicle, 12.2.48. (The Middlesex Chronicle has four editions. Unless stated, quotations from this paper will be taken from the edition covering the area of Keats School). The headline over this account of the Education Committee meeting read "Storm over Start of All-in Schools. Move for Local Consent Angers Labour Councillors".
 4. Middlesex Chronicle, 13.2.48.

school started there, the Labour Alderman who was quoted above as referring to "a threat", replied

"My visit to Harrow ... showed me a comprehensive school, and I would make that point with some of the people in the highbrow district of Twickenham. We expect the education officers to carry out the instructions of their Local Authorities, but we ask them to remember that they are carrying out the direction of the County Education Committee'."¹

Once the Education Committee had approved the recommendation to establish a number of comprehensive schools in September 1948, the Secondary Education Sub-Committee quickly set up a Special Sub-Committee of six members to examine which schools should become the first comprehensives². It was empowered to report direct to the Education Committee, within a fortnight. Only four days after appointment this special Sub-Committee had its first meeting, which was attended by the HMI for Middlesex. The Chairman of the Education Committee related³ that the HMI was favourably disposed towards the establishment of comprehensive schools. The CEO, on the other hand, counselled caution⁴. Whereas the Labour Group initially proposed twelve schools, the CEO managed to persuade Labour councillors to reduce this to six in order first to gain some experience of such schools.

The Special Sub-Committee met on 27th February. On 1st March the CEO wrote to the Minister of Education seeking approval for the establishment of six comprehensive schools in September 1948⁵. This was before the Special Sub-Committee had reported on its deliberations to the Education Committee. It did so on 8th March, recommending that six schools should become comprehensive schools in the autumn of that year⁶. For this item the press and public were excluded and thus local

1. Middlesex Chronicle, 13.2.48.

2. SESC/10/23.2.48, p.80.

3. Interview: Cr.Mrs. Beech.

4. Interview: Mr. Salmon.

5. SESC/11/31.5.48, p.35. Minister of Education's letter, acknowledging that of CEO.

6. EC/86/8.3.48, p.122. These minutes also gave brief details of the six schools: nature and age of buildings, number of pupils accommodated, anticipated roll in September.

papers carried no detailed accounts. The names of the six proposed schools with details of their accommodation and pupil roll were given and it was added that the Sub-Committee would be visiting each of these schools and that recommendations about staffing and organisation would be made. Asked during an interview how the particular schools were chosen, the Chairman of the Education Committee stated¹ that they had been selected on officer advice. The Education Committee received the Sub-Committee's report, resolved that consultations with representatives of the Divisional Executives or District Sub-Committees be proceeded with and that arrangements be made for issuing advertisements for Head Teachers - on all of which the Education Committee should receive a Report at its next meeting.²

Activities now shifted from County to local level and most of the relevant decisions taken in April, May and June are given in detail in the two case studies. Over a period, all schools in question were visited by members of the Special Sub-Committee and discussions held.

The teachers were the first to be affected. Advertisements for posts of head and assistant teachers at the new comprehensive schools appeared on April 10th in the Times Educational Supplement and present head teachers of the schools to be converted received notices of dismissal. The advertisements specified the areas of the County in which appointments to comprehensive schools would be made, and thus it was through press advertisements that it first became generally known where these new schools would be located. The Middlesex Chronicle³ pointed out that the notices to head teachers were not dismissals from the education service. Comparable posts were likely to be offered where re-appointment to the teacher's own school did not occur. However, the paper added that these notices had come as a shock, and assistant teachers at the same schools were wondering whether they, too, would receive such

1. Interview: Cr. Mrs. Beech.

2. EC/86/8.3.48, p.122.

3. 23.4.48. Also in Hounslow edition. Headline: "Head Teachers given Notice. First Comprehensive Schools".

notices¹. The main substance of the letter of dismissal dated 23.4.48. read²:

"... 'If the Minister's approval is forthcoming it will be necessary for the committee to review the staffing of the schools which have been selected for reorganisation and which include the school of which you are now head. The change in their character may necessitate some redistribution of the existing staff of the schools affected. In order that the committee may be free to make any essential changes I am directed to give you formal notice to terminate your present appointment with effect from August 31st. I am to assure you that the committee will have the most careful regard to the interests of the teachers affected in making any necessary transfers, and that you will be consulted before any such transfer is decided upon.' "

The Chairman of the County Council's Education Committee maintained at a County Council meeting on 26.4.48, that

" 'This cannot be regarded as summary dismissal'..."

and added that the teachers concerned would discuss the position fully at a meeting shortly to be held³. Such a meeting was held on 13th May 1948 at the Middlesex Guildhall, a whole month after the appearance of public advertisements, when the teachers met members of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee in private⁴.

It is appropriate at this stage to treat in some detail the attitude of the organised teachers, since the implementation of the Education Committee's policy undoubtedly depended on their cooperation. From the records of the Middlesex County Teachers' Association (MCTA) it is evident that there was a good deal of disquiet among teachers about both the policy of the County Council and more particularly the lack of information and consultation. This Association had in fact prepared a Memorandum for submission to the Middlesex Education Committee, and - as soon as it became known that a few comprehensive schools were to be

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1. Mr. Sparrow recollected during an interview that all teachers at one of the schools affected (Byron School) received notice of dismissal. He was then Deputy Head at the Boys' Department and his wife was on the staff of the Girls' Department of Byron School. This recollection was inaccurate, but indicative of the fears of teachers at the time.
 2. Middlesex Chronicle, 30.4.48. Headline: "Not Summary Dismissal says County".
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid., Hounslow Edition, 14.5.48.

established - submitted this to the Education Committee. This was in January 1948¹; the Memorandum expressed a generally positive response to the establishment of comprehensive schools whilst at the same time asking that the position of staff be safeguarded in a variety of ways.

By April, the Executive of the MCTA decided to review its Memorandum because of the anxiety in the minds of both Heads and Assistant Teachers after advertisements for posts at the new comprehensive schools had appeared. Indeed, the NUT Divisional Secretary visited the staffs of certain schools which were in September to become comprehensive. The Council accepted the Executive's revised Memorandum, amended it in certain respects on the suggestion of the Divisional Secretary, and appointed a deputation of four and the Divisional Secretary to present the Memorandum to the Chairman of the Middlesex Education Committee².

The MCTA thought that whatever type of school was selected for conversion, at least an equal number of teachers would be needed now and eventually many more would be necessary. As children already in the schools concerned would finish the courses embarked on, the services of the majority of the present staff would be required. The main purpose of the Memorandum was to make suggestions so that the staffing problem could be solved with the minimum of disturbance. Existing staff should have first consideration and be assured about their security of tenure with the LEA. Present Heads should also have first consideration; those displaced should be given assurances on salary and status. The Memorandum ended on a twofold appeal³. To the Authority it was suggested that the success of the scheme depended on the teachers, and therefore the Authority should take the

"earliest opportunity to explain what is proposed so that every teacher may be in a position to know exactly what will be required. We believe that if this is done the number of transfers will be relatively small."

Clearly an appeal that teachers be given early information. To the teachers the Memorandum had this to say -

1. 916/1/19.1.48.

2. 916/1/19.4.48.

3. Ibid. Extracts made from Memorandum appended to the Minutes.

".. it is the duty of all to take the necessary steps to ensure that they will make themselves acquainted with what is demanded and that they should meet wherever possible, and particularly in the localities, to discuss the many problems that have to be faced. We would point out the enormous opportunities which are open to all who are progressive, keen and courageous. We believe that if this is done enthusiastically, there will be many opportunities for advancement and the fear of transfer or uncertainty will be substantially reduced."

The MCTA deputation was received by the CEO two days after the adoption by Council of the Memorandum. When reporting back¹, the deputation stated that they had been favourably received, that every point in their Memorandum had been discussed and ^{that} they had stressed anxiety which had occurred due to lack of information; the appearance of the recent advertisements; doubt as to security of tenure for heads and assistants; and hardship in the event of transfer. The CEO had assured the delegation "that every consideration would be given to existing staffs", that most of the present staff would be required in the new comprehensive schools, that the advertisements for specialists had appeared to fill the gaps, that all present school staffs were invited to apply and would be considered. He further spoke of the difficulties in transferring Head Teachers because of the powers of certain Divisional Executives². Posts of responsibility could not be guaranteed because these were held on a year to year basis. Nor could compensation be given for compulsory transfers - the Ministry of Education would not allow it; but it was doubtful whether such transfers would arise. The Report concluded that the

"CEO stated 'formal notice' to terminate appointments was necessary, but he said 'the position of all will be safeguarded, and there is no authority which gives more sympathetic treatment to its teachers than Middlesex. It is a tradition'."

Still there continued to be grumbles within the MCTA, although resolutions adopted on the whole looked to the future rather than condemn the County Council for past errors. At the Council Meeting in late May³,

1. 916/1/26.4.48.

2. See Part I, Chapter 3, p.85. Head Teachers of secondary schools were appointed by the CC on the recommendation of a Joint Committee on which CC and Divisional Executive had equal representation. Head Teachers of primary schools were appointed by Divisional Executives.

3. 916/1/31.5.48.

the representative for South West Middlesex - the area of the County where opposition was greatest as will be seen from the next section - moved:

"That the Council of the MCTA is of the opinion that before any further schools are decided upon for conversion to comprehensive schools, adequate opportunity for consultation and preparation should be provided. Further, the Council would welcome the setting up of a committee, representative of the LEA and the Teachers, to make the fullest possible preparations for any such schemes."

A critical addendum

"And ask the Middlesex Education Committee to make clear how it proposes to honour the hitherto accepted standards of good faith between it and the profession,"

was lost, whilst the original motion was adopted. A week later another critical motion¹ disapproving

"the efforts of the Middlesex Education Committee to implement the Comprehensive School Plan at this inopportune time,"

and strongly resenting

"the discourtesy already shown to certain teachers..."

was withdrawn when the NUT Divisional Secretary² explained that in asking the Middlesex Authority to

"confine its experiment to two comprehensive schools for this year" the Minister of Education had further suggested that the chosen schools should be in areas where both parents and teachers were in sympathy with the experiment.

Finally, an attempt to get a referendum of all teachers before discussing further a resolution from Wembley

"That the Council of the MCTA welcomes the Education Committee's Plan to institute a number of comprehensive schools in Middlesex in September 1948"

was defeated by 28 to 6 votes, even though the Wembley resolution was then endorsed by only 17 to 12.³

1. 916/1/7.6.48.

2. It is of interest that the NUT Divisional Secretary was extremely well informed and up to date on the LEA's negotiations concerning the planned comprehensive schools. On this occasion he possessed precise knowledge of the content of the Minister's letter, which at this time had not yet been before the full Education Committee.

3. 916/1/7.6.48.

Thus those teachers who were organised in the NUT, through their Council for Middlesex, continued to support the Labour controlled County Council in its attempts to introduce comprehensive schools. Accusations were made in some quarters, however, that this support for the County Council's policy did not reflect majority teacher opinion. Even the original Memorandum submitted to the Middlesex Education Committee by MCTA in January 1948 was said to have been adopted on a minority vote, and according to a local teacher,

"... when the memoranda on comprehensive schools came before the MCTA Committee early this year, it was stated that they wanted it hurried through that night... It was sent through to the County without any of the teachers, apart from the Committee, having any discussion."¹

The NUT Divisional Secretary thought it untrue that the MCTA Memorandum on Comprehensive Schools had been "hurried through". The issue, he said², had been discussed for fully eighteen months; among teachers it was the big talking point at the time. He thought this accusation must have been made by opponents of comprehensive schools inside the MCTA.

The MCTA records show that conferences on the comprehensive school issue were held for teachers between 1946-48, but the establishment of the special sub-committee of five to draft a report on this matter was set up only on 8.12.47, met on 1.1.48, and reported to the Executive on 12.1.48. A week later, on 19th January, the Memorandum in question was adopted by the MCTA Council. This could be said to be rather fast work.

The MCTA Council Minutes³ do not record the January voting figures, but two local papers⁴ gave them as follows:

	<u>Surrey Comet</u>	<u>Middlesex Chronicle</u>
For the Memorandum	16	16
Against	13	12
Abstentions	11	11

1. Middlesex Chronicle. Also Hounslow Edition. 16.7.48.

2. Interview.

3. 916/1/19.1.48.

4. Middlesex Chronicle. Also Hounslow Edition. 16.7.48.
Surrey Comet. 17.7.48.

The Surrey Comet included these voting figures under the headline "Teachers v. Council. Comprehensive Schools: New Attack", whilst the Middlesex Chronicle one was "Teachers Vote Against Comprehensive Schools. NUT Referendum". Both papers in their articles gave the results of a referendum held "recently" by the Middlesex Secondary and Technical Association of the NUT. This Association was said to have about 600 members, being open to all secondary school teachers in the County. The question put to members was

"Are you in favour of the Middlesex intention to dissolve all Middlesex Secondary Modern, Grammar and Technical Schools as such, and to re-organise them into comprehensive Schools?"¹

The results of the referendum were given in both papers, to which totals has been added the detailed breakdown (not published) from MCTA records².

	<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
Grammar	47	170	11
Technical	15	89	13
Teaching not in Middlesex	5	9	2
Left Profession	4	17	1
Total	71	285	27

Number Voting: 383
Total Membership: 630

The Secondary and Technical Association comprised only a small section of the NUT membership in Middlesex, the majority of whom were teachers in primary and secondary modern schools (the old elementary schools). There were at this time probably over 10,000 teachers working in Middlesex schools, and the NUT represented approximately 75% of these³.

1. Middlesex Chronicle. Also Hounslow Edition. 16.7.48.

2. 916/1/17.11.48.

3. Figures for 1953 were as follows:

	<u>Total Number of Teachers</u>	<u>In the Assocn.</u>	<u>% in type of school</u>	<u>% of total teachers</u>
MCTA of NUT	11,481	8,340	-	73
Middx. Joint Four	11,481			
(in type of school rep. by Jt.4)	(1,599)	1,225	76	11
Middx. ATTI	11,481			
(in type of school represented)	(598)	374	63	3

The NUT Divisional Secretary stated that the 1953 figures were representative of other years.

The detailed analysis of voting figures suggests that the Association consisted predominantly of NUT grammar and technical school teachers. Yet the Surrey Comet¹ held that the Secondary and Technical Association was more representative of teachers' views on the County Council's Comprehensive School Plan than the MCTA, which so far was the only teacher organisation to have favoured the Plan. The latter consisted of two members, "usually enthusiastic office holders", from each branch of the NUT in the County. The Middlesex Joint Four, added the Surrey Comet, the grammar school teachers organisation, had already condemned the scheme almost unanimously.

These accusations that the majority of teachers did not support the Middlesex initiative over comprehensive schools were made at the height of the controversy over the inclusion of the Keats County Grammar School among the first schools to be converted into comprehensives. Any division of opinion within the NUT's ranks would clearly have been highlighted at that time. MCTA records show, however, that even after the proposal concerning the grammar school had been dropped, some NUT members endeavoured to change MCTA policy. In November 1948, the Twickenham NUT branch submitted a resolution expressing concern that the MCTA Memorandum, presented to the Middlesex Education Committee in January 1948, purported to be the majority view of teachers in the County, when it had not been circulated to Schools until the following June. The Memorandum ought to be withdrawn until approved by a majority of the teachers in the County (this was lost 27-6) and in future a referendum of teachers should be held before a representative opinion on major educational policy was conveyed to the Middlesex Education Committee. To this an amendment was moved that before decisions on major educational policy are taken by the Council, there should be adequate discussion at Local Association level. Even this was defeated 21-11; the original motion favouring a referendum was lost 31-1.²

On referendums, the NUT Divisional Secretary stated³ that these were

1. Surrey Comet, 17.7.48.

2. 916/1/17.11.48.

3. Interview.

not an appropriate way to collect opinion, and that he had strongly advised the MCTA against holding a referendum on comprehensive school policy. "After all", he maintained, "there must be discussion before hands are held up."

Thus it has to be concluded that throughout 1948, at least the majority of the "enthusiastic office holders" of the NUT in Middlesex favoured the County Council's comprehensive school policy. The position of the Joint Four will be dealt with in the next section, since its undoubted opposition to the policy was most in evidence over the proposal for the Keats County Grammar School.

To return now to events at the Middlesex Guildhall. It was on 1st March that the CEO had written to the South West Middlesex Divisional Executive about the scheme for Keats School and to the Ministry of Education seeking approval for the establishment of six comprehensive schools in September. By the time the Minister replied, the agitation in South West Middlesex was at its height. The reply was dated 25.5.48, and was placed before the appropriate Sub-Committee a few days later¹. The Minister was prepared to approve two schools for the experiment, and set out criteria which in his view ought to guide the Authority in choosing the schools to be turned into comprehensives. These included that staff and parents should be favourably disposed to the scheme. Extracts from the Minister's letter are quoted later. The Secondary Education Sub-Committee, after discussion, decided that the Ministry be asked to approve a third school, and that at a Special meeting of the Sub-Committee actual schools should be selected on the basis of a factual report by the CEO².

The Report was duly submitted to the Sub-Committee on 11.6.48.³ It listed four schools from which two were to be chosen. The other two out of the original six schools which the County Council had suggested had already been dropped. Accommodation in these was considered unsuitable after visits undertaken with representatives of the Divisional

1. SESC/11/31.5.48, p.35.

2. Ibid., p.37.

3. Ibid., 11.6.48, p.54.

Executive and consultation with the HMI. The Minister had therefore confirmed that the choice be made as between the four remaining schools¹. The CEO's Report² specified the required accommodation for approximately 1,000 pupils; drew attention to the shortage of grammar school places in some areas, which meant that qualified pupils either had to be sent long distances or an attempt had to be made "to provide comprehensive education within the confines of a modern school". Further, new appointments would have to be made, the staffing ratio being gradually raised to that in grammar schools. Finally, success was more likely if staff and parents were in sympathy with the new venture, although some opposition was to be expected. Each of the four schools were then examined in detail, relevant information being given on all aspects. The decision was urgent, since staff had to be appointed and other arrangements made.

The Sub-Committee decided³ to defer the Keats School scheme because the new buildings of Shelley School, which were to form part of a comprehensive unit with Keats School, would not be ready in September. No reference was made in the minutes to the fact that this was the area where parental and teacher opposition had proved strongest. It favoured going ahead with the other three schools; Blake School was chosen as first priority; another school as the second because reorganisation there was essential anyway; and a deputation was to be sent to the Ministry to allow the third proposed school. In each of these three areas there was a shortage of grammar school places; the areas could be reasonably well defined, thus causing little interference with the organisation of other secondary schools; the buildings were comparatively modern and would not need major alterations for a few years; and local opinion favoured comprehensive schools. The Sub-Committee added that at an appropriate time representations would be made for permission to organise comprehensive secondary schools in South West Middlesex and

1. EC/87/14.6.48. Supplementary Report of SESC on Establishment of Comprehensive Schools, p.49.

2. SESC/11/11.6.48, p.54.

3. Ibid., p.55.

other suitable areas. A Conservative member of the Sub-Committee voted against this last recommendation¹.

It is interesting in this connection that the former CEO did not recollect the association of any grammar school with the early comprehensive proposals², although he did have memories of a stormy meeting in South West Middlesex. The idea had been, he said, to choose an area where no competing grammar school existed, as parents would otherwise mostly choose the grammar school. Clearly that had been his wish all along, but the Education Committee had insisted on the inclusion of at least one grammar school among the first proposals. According to the former Chairman³, the choice of Keats Grammar School had been made on advice of HMI and the officer concerned. Its accommodation was most unsatisfactory compared with other grammar schools in the County. The officer felt something had to be done about this school, and as the County Council's policy was that comprehensive schools be established, the officer had suggested improvements for the school within that framework.

Deferment of the scheme involving Keats School was made public as one item in the report from the Secondary Education Sub-Committee to the Education Committee on 14.6.48. Meanwhile, however, pressure had been put on Labour Councillors at the County Council meeting at the beginning of June⁴. The Leader of the Conservative Opposition Group had asked whether

"in view of the overwhelming opposition expressed at a recent meeting of parents in the South West Middlesex Division, the Education Committee would reconsider the issue."

To this the Labour Vice-Chairman had replied that the Conservative Leader

"could hardly be serious when he suggested that the Council should reconsider its policy because of opposition, overwhelming or otherwise, expressed at one meeting in the County..."

1. SESC/11/11.6.48, p.55.

2. Interview: Mr. Salmon.

3. Interview: Cr. Mrs. Beech.

4. Middlesex Chronicle, 4.6.48. The following extracts are quoted from this account of the meeting, headed "No Change of Plan".

" 'I suppose I have to accept that'"

commented the Conservative Leader,

"and asked if the Vice-Chairman could give any information as to whether the Minister of Education had expressed any idea with regard to comprehensive schools in the County."

In quoting the Vice-Chairman's reply, it should be remembered that the Minister's letter approving that two comprehensive schools be selected by the County Council was dated 25.5.48. and had been before the Secondary Education Sub-Committee on 31.5.48. The County Council meeting in question was on 2.6.48:

"The Minister has approved the setting up of certain comprehensive schools and has left it to the County Council to make representations as to which schools these should be. ... the Minister had approved the number of schools chosen for the purpose and had laid down no conditions about them."¹

It would seem that the Labour members of the County Council were not at all keen that the Minister's criteria for judging which schools should be chosen for the experiment should gain publicity, otherwise why should the Vice-Chairman of the County Council have said emphatically that the Minister "had laid down no conditions.." The argument that he had no business to refer to the content of the Minister's letter until it had first been properly brought to the notice of the Education Committee does not hold, since in fact he did reveal part of its content in the reply².

There is also the fact that when the Education Committee meeting was held, the full text of the Minister's letter was made available only as a result of a request by a Conservative Councillor that the CEO read it to the Committee. The Sub-Committee's Report to the Education Committee quoted only some extracts, conveniently omitting important references. One consequence of this was that the letter was then fully

1. My italics.

2. It is, of course, possible that the Vice-Chairman was not well informed on the full contents of the Minister's letter. The NUT Divisional Secretary - who referred to these contents correctly at an MCTA meeting a few days later (see page 216, footnote 2) - stated in an interview that he was frequently better informed than councillors!

fully reproduced in the local press, and there were also questions asked in Parliament. In the extracts now given¹, those passages reproduced for the Education Committee in the Sub-Committee's Report are underlined. The full letter was presented to the Sub-Committee on 31.5.48, and later published in the Middlesex Chronicle². The Minister declared himself

"... in wholehearted agreement with the Authority's view that it would be to the general advantage if experience can be gained of this particular type of school. He therefore welcomes the initiative which the Authority are showing by their proposal to set up a small number of comprehensive schools as an experiment. At the same time he thinks that the detailed arrangements which will have to be made and which are no more than outlined in the Authority's letter will present the Authority and the teachers with problems of such a character that the Authority would be well advised to limit the scale of the experiment, at any rate for this year. He desires me therefore to suggest that the Authority should confine themselves to make the experiment at two schools, choosing those two where conditions are likely to be most conducive to success. ..."

In making their choice the Authority will doubtless bear in mind the importance of selecting the schools where conditions are most favourable to the conduct of the experiment. In particular the Minister regards it as very important that the introduction of the Comprehensive School System should not lead to the classes at any school having larger numbers in them than they have under the existing organisation. It is of no less importance to the success of the experiment that the staffs of the schools affected and the parents of the pupils concerned, should be in sympathy with its aims and methods.

The Minister assumes too that the changes contemplated will not involve any substantial building work other than what is already in the Authority's existing or proposed programmes. Subject to the foregoing points the Minister approves the setting up of two Comprehensive Schools and he would be glad to be informed which two schools the Authority finally selects for the experiment."

The Education Committee, after hearing the Minister's full letter, agreed to recommend to the County Council that Blake School and one other Secondary Modern School should be chosen as the two schools for immediate reorganisation as comprehensive secondary schools. Further,

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1. SESC/11/31.5.48, p.35.
EC/87/14.6.48, p.49.
 2. Middlesex Chronicle, 18.6.48.

the Minister was to be asked to receive a deputation which should press for approval of a third comprehensive school.

An attempt was made, however, to refer back the proposal that representations be made at the appropriate time to the Minister for permission to organise comprehensive schools in South West Middlesex and other suitable areas. This was lost by 24-13¹, and this recommendation, therefore, also went forward to the County Council.

In moving the reference back, the same Conservative Councillor who had insisted on hearing the full text of the Minister's letter, said this proposal did not come within the terms of the Minister's letter - no one could doubt that staff and parents had protested in South West Middlesex². The Councillor concluded

" 'We should not at this stage, while there is a very strong feeling of opposition as evidenced by meetings which had been held, and by meetings of the staff, try to keep this fire kindling!'"

The Middlesex Chronicle account of the Education Committee Meeting continues that a Labour councillor then declared that the Conservative spokesman

"had laid down a new principle in local government - that staff were to dictate policy, as well as to obey that policy which was laid down by the authority. It was the logical outcome of what ... had [been] said. 'Nonsense', interpolated [the Conservative member], but [the Labour member] went on to say that if the Committee gave way on a matter of principle because the staff objected, it would be contrary to all his views of local government. He agreed that the staff should make representations on matters which had a personal effect on them, but in the final analysis it was for the authority to lay down policy."

This must have been a view prominent in the minds of Labour councillors. The Labour Chairman of the Education Committee, when interviewed in 1965, some seventeen years later, argued that the grammar school had to be kept to the fore in connection with comprehensive schemes in order to assert the right of the Education Authority to make policy and to refute the idea that policy was a responsibility of the teaching staff.

1. EC/87/14.6.48, p.49.

2. Middlesex Chronicle, 18.6.48.

She nevertheless agreed, in retrospect, that opposition in South West Middlesex had had something to do with their decision to drop the grammar school proposal.

Publicly, at the time, the Labour councillors insisted to the bitter end that the Keats Scheme had not been abandoned but merely deferred, because the new buildings of Shelley School were not ready. This was what the Chairman of the Education Committee stated when at the County Council meeting on 30.6.48 attempts were renewed to delete the recommendation that further approaches would be made to the Ministry of Education at suitable times to organise comprehensive schools in other parts of the County than the three immediately envisaged. This time the Leader of the Conservative Opposition Group took the initiative, saying that "the experiment was regarded by many people with apprehension."¹

The Labour Chairman

"...cleared up the point about experiments. She said all education was an experiment and they were all the time feeling their way towards something better. Only in that way were comprehensive schools experimental. The County Development Plan was based on comprehensive schools..."

At the following meeting of the Education Committee it was reported that the Minister had approved the third comprehensive school, without receiving a deputation². And so, in September 1948, Heads and Staffs having been appointed, three comprehensive schools were started in Middlesex, one of which reverted back to Secondary Modern status a few years later.

There arose after the establishment of the schools one further major problem. Could a 'balanced' intake be secured by these schools? In 1948 parents in the three areas whose children had already passed the County Eleven Plus test in February were given the option of sending

1. Middlesex Chronicle, 2.7.48. Heading: "'Comprehensive' Plan is only Deferred".
2. EC/87/12.7.48, p.129. The former Chairman of the Education Committee (Cr.Mrs. Beech) in an interview said she had 'fixed' this when she met the Minister informally at Llandudno at the Association of Education Committees' Conference. The previous decision allowing only two schools had been made at officer level in the Ministry, she thought.

them to the comprehensive or to a grammar school. When transfer arrangements from primary to secondary schools for 1949 were under discussion, however, the Schools Sub-Committee approved the proposal of the CEO that children in the three comprehensive school catchment areas would not need to sit the County test in future. The County Council accepted this recommendation in November. The Schools Sub-Committee decision was recorded as follows¹:

"The Sub Committee was of opinion that it was a matter of importance that the pupils admitted to the comprehensive schools should be a cross-section of the children of appropriate age living in the catchment area defined for the school. It was intended from the outset that the pupils should be admitted to the comprehensive school on the basis of age and residence and that the selection of the particular course suited to their aptitudes and abilities should be made on or after transfer to the secondary school, due regard being paid to the child's record in the primary school. In these circumstances it would not be necessary for children living in an area served by one of the new comprehensive schools to take the entrance examination to grammar schools."

Not that this decision went through unchallenged. "Parents will Lose the Right to Choose. A New Criticism of Comprehensive Schools" was splashed across the front page of one local paper². This report of the Middlesex Education Committee meeting explained that one of the Conservative minority spokesmen held that the suggested procedure appeared "to be riding rather roughshod over the parents' rights", and that the legal position ought to be clarified before going ahead. One of the Labour members was reported to have said³ that the Conservatives would do

"everything they could to destroy the idea of comprehensive schools. That the issue should be thrown into the political arena was one of the worst things that had ever happened to education in the country. When it first came before the Committee it was agreed without any dissentient voice. ... it was obvious that there had been a political move to do away with comprehensive schools. He was prepared to fight the next County Council election

1. SchsSC/1/21.10.48, p.48.

2. Middlesex Chronicle, 12.11.48.

3. Ibid.

with comprehensive schools as a major issue, ... because he was convinced that parents desired them and that they were educationally sound."

The County tests were usually held in February, by which time the CEO was fully aware of parental opposition to the above decision not to allow children in comprehensive school catchment areas to sit the test. Parents' complaints¹ were made on the following grounds: that their child should attend an established grammar school; that the child had the "right" to take the entrance examination; that a single-sex school was preferred; that a denominational school (usually by RCs) was preferred; finally, that attendance at a particular school was desired - as a right under Section 76 of the 1944 Education Act, because another child in the family already attended it, or because the child was already in the preparatory department of a direct grant or independent school.

The Report² which the CEO presented to the Schools Sub-Committee on 17.2.49 explained that, in view of the many objections received from parents by himself, the Education Committee Chairman, Divisional Education Officers and by MPs, he had already sought the advice of the Ministry of Education. The Minister replied he had no objection against children in comprehensive school catchment areas not sitting the selection test, provided that he had approved the establishment of the particular school. But he reserved his position in the event of an appeal under Section 76 of the 1944 Education Act by an aggrieved parent. In view of this reservation, the Clerk to the County Council had felt it wise to take Counsel's opinion on whether Section 76 entitled parents to choose a grammar school in preference to a comprehensive one.

Meanwhile, continued the CEO's Report, every effort had been made "to deal with these protests in accordance with the Committee's policy ... but

"it is apparent having regard to the probable attitude of the Ministry in the event of an appeal that exceptions to the general arrangements may be unavoidable in the case of RCs, and probably in other cases where close family associations can be said to exist..."

1. SchsSC/2/17.2.49, p.52.

2. Ibid.

This last comment reflected a further letter from the Minister on this issue, reported to the Sage Schools Sub-Committee meeting, which favoured denominational grounds and family association as reasonable grounds on which to respect parent's wishes to allow the child to take the examination. Close family association with a particular school was held to exist

"where a parent was there or a brother or a sister is now or has been there recently. ... This last category would probably include many cases of children now in the junior department of a grammar school. We do not feel that being in the junior department would of itself be a sufficient reason."¹

Too bad for first generation children in a preparatory department without a brother or sister already in the senior grammar school! Nor was "preference for a single-sex school as by itself a valid reason."

The Sub-Committee agreed that the CEO should notify parents that permission would be given for pupils in comprehensive school catchment areas to take the supplementary entrance examination to grammar schools where admission to a specified school was desired on grounds of close family association (as defined in the Minister's letter), genuine denominational preference, or other exceptional reasons to be considered on the merits of the case. Doubtful cases were to be referred to the Chairman of the Education Committee because of the urgency of the matter, since supplementary tests were shortly to be held. Thus came the first concession preventing achievement of a "balanced" intake to comprehensive schools. Naturally parents were not satisfied with this compromise proposal - all children should be permitted to sit the test - and the CEO reported to the following Sub-Committee meeting that more protests had been received. Meanwhile 74 pupils in the three areas had been permitted to sit the supplementary tests, 36 on denominational and 38 on family association grounds. The Minister had approved (!) the Authority's compromise arrangements which precisely fitted his own earlier prescription. The same caveat appeared: approval was given without prejudice to any decision in the event of an appeal from an

1. SchsSC/2/17.2.49, p.53.

aggrieved parent¹. The Clerk to the County Council was still awaiting Counsel's opinion, and by the time this was received, elections had been held and control of the County Council lay with the Conservatives.

At the Education Committee meeting in May a Petition, signed by 3,078 residents in the Blake School area, was presented². Consideration of the Petition was referred to the Schools Sub-Committee, and when that met later the same month, the Petition was referred in turn to the Special Sub-Committee whose main job it was to revise the Draft Development Plan in the light of Conservative views about the organisation of secondary education. In any case, by this time the Petition was overshadowed by the Report of the Clerk to the County Council on Comprehensive Schools and Parents Rights. Counsel's Opinion had been received, and was summarised in this Report³. It was made very clear to councillors that the Legal Opinion was not to be made available to the press, since embarrassment for the Authority might be caused if Counsel's views on parents' rights became widely known. Thus, when this part of the Schools Sub-Committee Report to the Education Committee was presented in June, the press and public were excluded. What, then, were these views which might cause the Authority embarrassment?

The County Council had asked King's Counsel four questions⁴:

- (1) Has the LEA power to exclude pupils from any of its schools on the ground only that such pupils do not live in the catchment area allocated to the school?
- (2) Can a parent be compelled to send his child to a comprehensive school in the catchment area where the child lives? Can attendance be enforced under Section 37 of the 1944 Act or otherwise?
- (3) In what circumstances and on what grounds, if any, is a parent entitled in law to refuse to send a child to a comprehensive school?
- (4) To what extent must the County Council comply with the parent's

1. SchsSC/2/17.3.49, p.91. Minister's letter dated 4.3.49.

2. EC/90/9.5.49, p.114.

3. SchsSC/3/19.5.49, p.23.

4. Ibid.

wishes that his child shall attend the school selected by him - under Section 76 of the 1944 Act?

The main points of the Clerk's Summary of Counsel's answers were as follows:

Pupils were to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents provided this was compatible with the provision by the Authority of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure.

The Authority's duty was to provide proper educational facilities for the County, and a catchment area policy for particular schools was tenable as a general condition of admission to a school.

Thus a parent did not possess a statutory right to insist a child be admitted to a particular school merely because the school was maintained by the Authority.

Nevertheless, admission must not be refused on other than reasonable grounds. Thus the Authority's catchment area policy would have to be subject to qualifications. If a school was full, a clear case for refusal existed. But otherwise, the Authority would have to take into account any special reasons for the parent's choice and the suitability of other schools where there was room, including any comprehensive schools. Unreasonable public expenditure would be acceptable as an objection by the Authority to a particular school chosen by the parent in the case of transport costs, but unfilled places at a comprehensive school, resulting in fruitless expenditure by the Authority in building the school, would not. Compulsory attendance at a comprehensive school could be secured only by use of a school attendance order, applicable only when a parent failed to have his child suitably educated. Even then, the Act empowered the parent to specify the school in the Order and the Council could argue against the parent's choice only on the grounds that it was unsuitable or involved unreasonable public expenditure.

Counsel concluded that the Authority had no general power to compel a parent to send his child to a comprehensive school because a School Attendance Order would be resorted to only rarely and a parent could make a very good case for not sending his child to a comprehensive school

(religious grounds, objection to co-education, family association with a particular school). As between two schools available in the same area, the parent's choice would be upheld.

Before Counsel's opinion and the Sub-Committee's recommendation that all children be permitted to sit the eleven plus test was reported to the Education Committee (in private session) further consideration was given to the matter by a Special Sub-Committee early in June. How was admission to a school to be decided? The conclusion drawn was that for a child who had qualified for grammar school in the test¹

"... it is impracticable to enforce the rule previously made by your Committee that pupil's living in the catchment areas of the three comprehensive schools shall be refused admission to grammar schools by reason only of the fact that they live in the catchment areas of these schools. ... other considerations will have to be taken into account and the applications examined individually."

Further, in examining such applications, the same considerations should be borne in mind which previously had guided the Committee in deciding whether to accede to a parent's request that his child be permitted to sit the supplementary examination. These were: preference for a particular school on denominational or family association grounds, or any other exceptional reason. This, it was thought, would be

"the most reasonable way in which the wishes of parents desiring a grammar school course for their children can be met in the areas concerned."

In the light of Counsel's Opinion, the Education Committee accepted the Schools Sub-Committee recommendation that all children in the age-group living in the three catchment areas be permitted to take the County test if their parents so desired. Parents were to be informed that the test would be taken "without prejudice to the pupil's admission to a comprehensive secondary school or to a grammar school."² If the child qualified, then preference for admission to a particular grammar school was to be handled as indicated in the above paragraph.

1. EC/90/13.6.49, p.135. Report of Sub-Committee Meeting held 3.6.49.

2. SchsSC/3/19.5.49, p.24.

It meant that the three comprehensive schools operating within the selective system would get a "balanced" intake only to the extent that they attracted through their reputation children who had qualified for grammar school. Everyone knows that reputations take time to acquire. This second concession to parental pressure restored the status quo ante.

(b) South West Middlesex Defective Comprehensive School Proposal

More alarming to former pupils of Keats School than the abolition of fees after the war

"was the proposal to turn the School into a comprehensive school. The Headmaster was informed by letter that (as a result of this plan) his appointment as Headmaster would be terminated. There was deep resentment of this action, and fierce opposition to the reorganisation. 'Vigilance Committees' were set up; LFs and Councillors were lobbied; Whitehall received a deluge of letters; the Sixth Formers at the School presented a petition of protest. There is little doubt that all this action was a decisive factor in causing the scheme to be withdrawn; but even though victory had been won ... the Headmaster could not easily forget the way in which the proposals had been made."¹

* * * *

Ever since Middlesex County Council had adopted the comprehensive school as the basis for secondary school organisation, the grammar schools and their teachers had been worried about their fate. No wonder, seeing it had been decided that the grammar schools were to be identified with the new comprehensives from the start. Twenty-eight Organisations of Old Pupils, Parent and Staff Associations connected with nineteen schools had in July 1947 formed the Committee of Middlesex Secondary Schools Organisations (i.e. Grammar Schools) and had protested against the Middlesex policy and Development Plan. The Old Pupils' Association and the Keats School Parents Association represented 150 and 600 members respectively on this Committee².

The Joint Committee of the Four Secondary Associations in Middlesex - representing the large majority of grammar school teachers (approximately 1050) organised in the Association of Head Mistresses, the Association of Head Masters, the Assistant Masters Association and the Association of Assistant Mistresses - had also protested in 1947. This Committee stated

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1. Quoted from the History of Keats School.
 2. Committee of Middlesex Secondary Schools Organisations. "A Report of Evidence and Opinion in Opposition to .. the Development Plan of the Middlesex County Council". 1948. (available DES Library).

they recognised that general policy had to be made by the Education Committee, which policy had then to be implemented by the teachers to the best of their ability. But they felt it their duty to point out dangers and defects of the proposed new plan. Their comments had ended with the appeal that the comprehensive schools policy be experimental¹.

In 1948 the experiment was about to begin, even though the Labour members of the County Council saw red when the word "experiment" was mentioned. Many grammar school teachers, on the other hand, saw red when a grammar school was included in the first concrete proposals for comprehensive schools. Parental opposition in South West Middlesex was at its height in May and June 1948, but it is likely that this opposition was fanned out of all proportions by the Joint Four. True, the Chairman of the Parents' Committee stated that they had no connection with "a joint four" mentioned in a letter to the local Townswomen's Evening Guild in which the Leader of the Majority Party on the County Council told the women "rather than be stampeded in the way they have" they "ought to consider the value of the scheme to the children."² Presumably in the Labour Leader's eyes, the horse performing the stampede was the Joint Four.

When the former Labour Leader was interviewed³ he said that as soon as it became known that Heats Grammar School was to be one of the first comprehensive schools, two other well-known grammar schools in the South of the County, Schools A and B, became involved in the anti-comprehensive agitation. The Headmaster of School A, who was a Teacher Representative on the Middlesex Education Committee, had in 1947 at a public meeting in South West Middlesex spoken against the comprehensive school, and was a prominent member of his professional association⁴. That the Joint Four were involved in the anti-comprehensive agitation was confirmed in other interviews - one with the former Deputy Chief Education Officer

1. EDSC/III/26.6.47, p.115.

2. Middlesex Chronicle, 18.6.48. Account of a meeting of parents in South West Middlesex.

3. Interview: Cr. Oak.

4. Part III of the thesis discusses in detail the status and attitudes of Schools A and B.

of the County Council¹, who stated that the main opposition had come from the Joint Four; the other with the then Chairman of the County Council's Education Committee.

The latter² stated that the Head and staff of Keats School "were not with us". She had gone to the School to talk to the staff and explain the educational thought behind the idea, and had been closely questioned. The biggest factor in the opposition, in her view, was the Joint Four. "There was a concerted whip-up". Joint Four teachers from all over the County came to a meeting at the School which had to be held in the school field because the school hall was too small. The scheme involving Keats School was seen by them as a threat to grammar schools throughout the County. They recognised that there were Party political implications, and had strongly opposed the LCC plan. Opposition from parents at the Grammar School and in the catchment area was also strong, but she thought that, without Joint Four opposition, it would have been possible to explain the policy to parents.

But to begin at the beginning. Back in 1946, when the County Council's Education Committee had asked each Divisional Executive to make proposals for inclusion in the Development Plan, the South West Middlesex Divisional Executive had accepted the comprehensive school policy of the County. This despite the fact that some members of the Local Development Plan Sub-Committee initially preferred a tripartite system³.

Six comprehensive schools were ultimately to cater for all secondary pupils in the Division. However, two points were made strongly to the County at the time: that the Division objected to very large schools, and that the only Grammar School should be left undisturbed - at least until one comprehensive school was in a flourishing condition. In the Draft Development Plan it was stated that the Keats Grammar School should be left definitely until 1951. As the County Council had remained silent

1. Interview: Miss Trout.

2. Interview: Cr. Mrs. Beech.

3. Middlesex Chronicle, 21.5.48. Stated by the then Vice-Chairman of the Divisional Executive. The records of the Divisional Executive make no reference to this opinion.

on these reservations, the Divisional Executive had assumed they were accepted.

This much of the earlier background was reported in the local press at the height of the anti-comprehensive agitation in South West Middlesex. The records of the South West Middlesex Divisional Executive confirm that in December 1946, the Executive adopted the report of its Development Plan Sub-Committee¹ which declared itself "in complete accord" with the comprehensive school policy, and included the following passages:

"Your Sub-Committee ... recommends that a fully comprehensive scheme of secondary education can be met by the establishment of six comprehensive schools designed to admit a ten form entry to each school, each school to be organised in two departments, one for boys and one for girls, with both departments using much of the accommodation in common."

Facilities would be suitable for all pupils to the age of 15, and later 16, and provision

"... will also be made for pupils remaining at school until 18 years of age. Your Sub-Committee recommends that at each school provision be made for at least 40% of the pupils in attendance to receive that is at present referred to as 'secondary grammar' and 'secondary technical' education."

Evidently it was hoped to use the comprehensive school policy to acquire for the area a high proportion of 'grammar' and 'technical' school places. The records give no indication of opposition to large schools, unless the attempt to specify that ten form-entry schools should be organised in two departments is considered as indicative of views on this point. But there is clear evidence about the reservations over the only grammar school of the area:

"Your Sub-Committee has given careful consideration to the position of the Keats County Grammar School, the only school in the division which at the moment can provide a 'grammar school' course. The value of the work done by this school is most fully appreciated and it is evident that, whilst with completion of the Sub-Committee's proposals for secondary education, the six comprehensive secondary schools should cater for all pupils of secondary age in the division, the ... County Grammar School must for a number of years to come continue to fulfil the functions it now carries out."

1. SVM/DIV.EX/13.12.46, p.102, and
SVM/Dev.Plan SC/30.11.46.

In the detailed list of proposed new schools for the area, it was stated that the Keats Secondary Grammar School was "to be incorporated" in the first stage of the Development Plan, to be "fully comprehensive 1951/2".

Before examining in detail the sequence of events in South West Middlesex in 1948, it is important briefly to outline certain characteristics about this Divisional Executive. First of all, South West Middlesex was a non-excepted district; the Divisional Executive was made up of representatives from three Urban District Councils; reports of its meetings were submitted direct to the County Education Committee, not via a well established and powerful Borough Council, as was the case in excepted districts. It was a new area, educationally regarded as backward, and the councillors who served on the new Divisional Executive had no previous experience of exercising education powers¹. ✓

The whole area was expected to be one of expanding population, the Abercrombie Plan 'ceilings' were under review as the area would be affected by the development of Heathrow Airport, of which no account had yet been taken in current population estimates. When the 1951 Census was taken, the area had a population of just over 108,000, which by 1961 had risen to just over 134,000.

Politically it was a difficult area. The Urban District closest to London was usually Labour-controlled, the other two usually had Conservative majorities. Most of those who were interviewed in South West Middlesex (Officer: Mr. Pike; Teacher: Mr. Sparrow; Councillors: Cr. Holly and one other former member of the Divisional Executive) stated that the Divisional Executive deliberations had been subject to keen party politics. The first Chairman was a Labour man, but he died in 1947. The next Chairman², as well as the Vice-Chairman, were Conservatives. Thus by the time the issue of Keats School flared up,

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1. Mr. Sparrow, for example, stated that a South West Middlesex Teachers' Advisory Panel was formed, of which he was Secretary, instead of a Joint Consultative Committee of teacher and elected representatives, because the elected representatives on the Divisional Executive were too inexperienced in educational matters.
 2. Described by Mr. Whale in an interview as "a country squire type, a local JP".

the key persons on the Executive were Conservative. In addition, Conservative gains in the 1946 Urban District Council elections resulted in some Labour members of the Divisional Executive being replaced by Conservatives.

The Labour Chairman had taken the view, when proposals for the Development Plan were under consideration, that it was not the business of the Divisional Executive to settle policy - a matter for the County Council - but to examine the reasonableness of detailed proposals¹. Thus the Divisional Executive accepted the County Council's comprehensive school policy. As the Divisional Executive was a new body, and the comprehensive school was a new idea, it is entirely credible that most people had little understanding of what a comprehensive school was. Repeatedly it was stated in interviews that members of the Divisional Executive, teachers, let alone the general public, knew very little about the comprehensive school, and that in 1946 this issue was not a political one in South West Middlesex. A Labour member of the Divisional Executive and also a County Councillor at the time (Cr. Holly) thought that even in 1948 the comprehensive school was not a political issue in South West Middlesex, but that the protests occurred simply because Keats Grammar School was involved². The Divisional Officer³ stated that at the time the area had almost the character of a village, and that the Grammar School was regarded by the residents as "their" school. Many of them had attended it, and they were not going to have it merged with "those gypsies" at the secondary modern the other side of the railway.

It should also be mentioned that during the first three years of the new Divisional Executive's existence, three Divisional Education Officers were involved in its administration. As it was a new area and a new body, none of them had the detailed knowledge of its problems which an experienced Divisional Officer possesses. The first Divisional Officer served the area from its inception; a Chief Assistant (Mr. Whale) was appointed in January 1947 who in 1948 became the Acting Divisional Officer. He was in charge during the critical months, the new Divisional

1. Interview: Mr. Whale.

2. Interview: Cr. Holly.

3. Interview: Mr. Pike.

Officer (Mr. Pike), appointed in May 1948, being unable to take up his post until later that year.

It was early in 1948 that the CEO had enquired from the local Divisional Executive whether two new schools - Milton School and Shelley School - might become comprehensives that September. The answer given was that comprehensive schools would be welcomed at the earliest opportunity, but that proposals for the two named schools were premature, due to incomplete buildings. On 24th February, 1948, the Divisional Executive suggested that Byron School (Secondary Modern in two departments for Boys and Girls respectively under two Head Teachers) should be converted into a comprehensive school. The County Council accepted this but the CEO's letter of 1st March also contained another provisional proposal which was to cause most of the difficulties in the next few months: that Keats Grammar School and the new Shelley School should form one comprehensive unit. The County Council agreed that Milton School was to be left as a Secondary Modern for the time being. Children in its catchment area who passed the County test were to be transferred to the Keats/Shelley School comprehensive unit, whilst those in the area of Byron School were to make up the grammar element in that School when it became a comprehensive. There followed exploratory discussions at the Schools with a Sub-Committee of the County Education Committee. The Divisional Executive was addressed by the CEO and passed a resolution on 23rd March¹, expressing complete agreement with the County Council's two proposals². South West Middlesex was thus to have two out of the six comprehensive schools proposed by the Labour-controlled County Council.

According to the Chairman of the County Council's Education Committee, the Headmaster of Keats Grammar School was notified by telephone of the meeting held on 23rd March and its purpose³. The County Education

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1. Middlesex Chronicle, 21.5.48. Acting Divisional Officer's account of sequence of events.
 2. Ibid., 30.4.48. County Education Committee Chairman's account of sequence of events.
 3. Ibid.

Committee's decision to proceed with the two proposals in South West Middlesex was communicated to the Divisional Executive on 24th April¹, by which date the letters of dismissal to Heads of the affected schools had already been despatched. The Minutes of the South West Middlesex Divisional Executive show this sequence of events to be correct, except that the resolution of March 23rd supporting County Council policy was passed by the Divisional Executive members sitting as a General Purposes Committee, immediately preceeding the Divisional Executive meeting, which meant that the meeting was not open to the public and the press².

It was, then, during March and the early part of April that some people in the South West Middlesex Division first became acquainted with the County Council's concrete proposals for turning particular schools into comprehensives. Certainly the Divisional Education Officer, members of the Divisional Executive and the Heads of the Schools concerned were involved in discussions at this stage on a confidential basis. It is of interest here that the two Heads of the Boys' and the Girls' Department of Byron School first heard of the possibility of the inclusion of their schools not from an Officer of the LEA, but from the Divisional Secretary of the NUT³. Other members of the teaching staff were most likely not informed at this stage. It has to be remembered, in this connection, that the Minister's letter approving in principle that two comprehensive schools be started in September, was dated 25.5.48. Even then, the particular schools still had to be chosen and then approved by the Minister. The SESC of the Middlesex Education Committee a month earlier⁴ took the view that only when the Minister of Education had approved the setting up of comprehensive schools should the teaching staffs be informed

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1. Middlesex Chronicle, 21.5.48. Acting Divisional Officer's account of events.
 2. SVM/Div.Ex/General Purposes Con./23.3.48. Minute 90, p.28. Since 1960, meetings of any committee on which all members of a council sit are open to the press. But in 1948, when the Divisional Executive sat as a General Purposes Committee, it meant exclusion of the press.
 3. Interview.
 4. SESC/11/26.4.48, p.10.

regarding the proposals for their schools. Thus assistant teachers will most likely have been ignorant of the scheme when the Times Educational Supplement advertisements appeared¹.

Those at the Keats County Grammar School claimed in a letter of protest that for them the first official intimation of changes in the School was the Summary Notice of Dismissal received by the Headmaster, and this was certainly the sensational news that roused defendants of the grammar school in South West Middlesex from their slumbers. From late April onwards for several weeks, the local paper carried extensive accounts of many meetings, most of which turned into protest meetings even if not originally called for that purpose. Letters to the Editor appeared week by week, almost all opposing the County Council's proposed comprehensive scheme for the local grammar school. Press reports of County Council or County Education Committee meetings indicate the terms in which Labour members answered the accusations of their opponents.

"Head Teachers Given Notice. First Comprehensive Schools", was the front-page headline in the Middlesex Chronicle². The article explained that two days previously indication had been given that certain schools in South West Middlesex were to become comprehensive in September. At least three local head teachers had "received formal notices intimating that their appointments were to be terminated." The County Council had in February authorised the Education Committee to establish a small number of comprehensive schools in September and to appoint the necessary teaching staff. In a recent issue of the Times Educational Supplement, advertisements for posts at comprehensive schools had appeared mentioning among other areas those concerned in South West Middlesex. The advertisements mentioned that pupils already in the schools would complete their planned course, but the new normal intake would consist of the eleven plus age group (boys and girls) for the "catchment" area fixed for the school. The Middlesex Chronicle explained that the notices to

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1. According to an experienced Officer (Mr. Whale), it was the CEO's view that secrecy should be maintained until a policy was settled.
 2. Middlesex Chronicle. Also in Hounslow Edition. 23.4.48.

head teachers were not notices of dismissal from the education service. The teachers, if not reappointed, were likely to be offered comparable posts elsewhere in the County. Four months' notice was required to terminate head teachers appointments, three months those of assistant teachers. Naturally the assistant teachers at the same schools were wondering whether they would be receiving similar notices in due course. As was pointed out above, the same teachers had received no official information on the scheme for their schools, since the Minister had not yet approved the schemes in principle, let alone those for particular schools.

So much for the news item. There appeared in the same issue of the local paper¹ the following protest signed by all members of the staff at Keats School:

"We, the undersigned, ... wish to record our unanimous protest against the fact that the first official intimation received by Head or Staff of the contemplated change in the character of this School was the summary notice of dismissal sent to the Headmaster.

"This was received by him on April 21st, without previous consultation of any kind, and despite his 21 years as Head of the School and 36 years in the service of Middlesex Education Committee. We deplore not only the discourtesy of terminating such an appointment in this way, but also the fact that these matters have been withheld from public discussion."

This protest was to be forwarded to members of the County Council and the Education Committee, to local Members of Parliament, and Members of Parliament holding University seats. The following week another front page article appeared "Reply to Teachers. Not Summary Dismissal says County."² This gave an account of the statement by the Education Committee Chairman at a meeting of the County Council held on 28th April. She referred to the fact that when the County Council had agreed to establish comprehensive schools,

"The Teachers Association had themselves discussed some of the problems involved and had notified the Committee that they appreciated that it might mean changes in staffing arrangements, with the possible termination of some appointments..."

1. Middlesex Chronicle. Also in Hounslow Edition. 23.4.48.

2. Middlesex Chronicle, 30.4.48.

On 23rd March the local Divisional Executive (this was in fact the members sitting as the General Purposes Committee and therefore a private session, as mentioned earlier) had passed a resolution in complete agreement with the County Council's proposals for South West Middlesex.

"It was obviously essential, in order that the proper appointments for the headships of these schools should be made, to give the existing head teachers 4 months' notice. During the week before the notice was sent, the headmaster of the Keats County Grammar School stated to an official of the Education Department that he appreciated the technical position which must arise and asked if an application by him for the new headship would be considered. On April 15th he asked for an application form."

The Chairman then read the letter of dismissal, which was quoted in full earlier¹, and ended

" 'This cannot be regarded as summary dismissal, neither can it justifiably be considered the first notification to the head of the change'."

This last point is confirmed by the account of the sequence of events given above²; but it was only the Head, not the assistant teachers, who during March and early April had been involved in consultations. The assistant teachers could therefore justifiably claim that as far as they were concerned the 'dismissal' notice was the first official intimation. The teachers at Keats School, in any event, claimed subsequent to the Chairman's reply, that "the facts are as stated in our letter of protest and can be verified."³ Yet they must have known something of the scheme, because as is shown by a letter from a parent quoted below, the staff at Keats Grammar School spoke of impending reorganisation to their pupils.

The same front page in the Middlesex Chronicle had a reference to a remark by a speaker at a local Forum⁴ meeting implying that the

1. See page 213.

2. See page 241.

3. Middlesex Chronicle, 7.5.48.

4. This Forum had come into being in the summer of 1946. One of its functions was that it gave residents an opportunity for exchange of views with their councillors; many local difficulties had been sorted out as a result of questions to councillors (Middlesex Chronicle, 28.5.48.).

comprehensive school was a change "to be rushed upon the district". A question was asked what would happen to children who had taken the scholarship examination and had their names down for the grammar school. This question seemed to suggest lack of information among parents, which is further confirmed by an anxious parent's letter dated 22nd April, 1948, to the Chairman of the County Council's Education Committee. The parent, whose daughter attended the Keats Grammar School, enquired about the details of the impending reorganisation

"which may mean that some children will attend schools other than their present one."

The parent added that teachers had advised their pupils in this vague way. Assurance was to be given to the parent that existing pupils in the grammar school would continue undisturbed the course on which they had embarked¹. It would have been more to the point to inform parents before they were misinformed. ✓

There were also three letters of protest against the Keats scheme in the Middlesex Chronicle of 30th April, one of which was signed by six people, the second by an old Keats pupil, who became Chairman of the South West Middlesex Parents' Committee formed in May, the third by a lady (RBH), whose name was to appear frequently for some weeks in this connection, and who became Secretary of the Parents' Vigilant Committee formed in June. On this occasion she drew attention to the meetings of the South West Middlesex Divisional Executive meeting which residents could attend and to a meeting of protest on 5th May to be held at the School.

Finally, 'Chronicler' reported in the Middlesex Chronicle of 30th April that he had been chatting to the teachers who were disgusted at the treatment of the three head teachers. They told him teachers had not been consulted about the proposed changes at their school, and felt uneasy when certain areas of South West Middlesex were mentioned in the Times Educational Supplement advertisements for comprehensive school posts.

1. SESC/11/26.4.48, p.11.

It was only then that they realised their own school might be affected. 'Chronicle' wondered why the Education Committee should have acted in this secret manner. There was general resentment at the rush and the lack of consultation of teachers and parents. One prominent teacher, who thought there was "indecent haste on the part of the County to rush matters through", had stated that he had been on the look out for a report of a public meeting of the County Education Committee where these decisions were taken, and he had not yet found one¹. 'Chronicle' concluded²

"I then got into touch with several members of the Committee, but I could not find one of them willing to discuss the matter. It would seem that some official statement on the whole scheme should be made by the Education Committee, in order to allay the doubts and fears that are being expressed by the parents of the children at present attending local schools..."

"Crowded Meeting on Comprehensive Schools" held pride of place on the front page a week later³. Readers were told that the meeting had been organised by the South West Middlesex Teachers' Advisory Panel and held in the large Hall at the Keats County Grammar School⁴. The proceedings had to be halted to admit another 100 people who lined the walls of the hall. A printed statement prepared by the teachers and circulated to those present stated three arguments for and three against comprehensive schools. Four hundred copies had been printed but proved inadequate to go round. The favourable arguments were:

- (1) Ease of transfer of pupils between different courses of study;
- (2) Parity of esteem;
- (3) Ease of provision of a variety of courses.

Those against:

- (1) Loss of personal touch in the very large schools necessary;
- (2) Difficulties of establishing social and corporate life in large schools;
- (3) Ease of transfer could be achieved by careful organisation, even in separate schools.

1. As pointed out earlier, the Education Committee meeting on 8.3.48 had excluded press and public when the names of the 6 schools were considered.
 2. Middlesex Chronicle, 30.4.48.
 3. Ibid., 7.5.48.
 4. This was the first meeting to inform parents. It was called by the local Teachers' Advisory Panel, not by the LEA.

Soon after questions began, two Old Keats Association members interjected with a proposal - which was not acted upon - that the meeting should adjourn and resume outside the hall with a different Chairman. Another speaker appealed that the meeting should not be pre-judged. A number of speakers condemned comprehensive schools, several declaring that even those who advocated such schools did not know what they meant. The Second Master at Keats School said that if a new system of education was to be started, it should be done under the best possible conditions. The present scheme was being started under almost impossible conditions. Eleven weeks before the break up for the summer, the new Head had not yet been appointed - and this could not be done until the Minister had approved the scheme. Appointment of other staff had to wait until the new Head was settled.

Immediately after this meeting, a gathering of protesting parents was held outside the local telephone exchange at which a committee of parents was formed to organise a public meeting of protest. The parents determined to write letters to the Minister and the County Education Committee.

The same week there had been a meeting of the Divisional Executive which had met in the Keats School Hall instead of its usual abode - the school library - in order to accommodate a greater number of visitors, of whom there were about twenty¹. The acoustics of the School Hall were so bad that few heard what business was being transacted². It was stated that the Head of Shelley School had received the dismissal notice before his appointment was confirmed. A Conservative member of the Divisional Executive seemed to complain that

"the whole time ... the County pigeon-holed the Executive's recommendations and nothing further happened. He maintained the Executive was not having a fair deal from the higher authority."³

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1. Middlesex Chronicle, 7.5.48. This seems to suggest a very small school library in a school for 500 pupils.
 2. This seems to suggest an out-of-date school hall! — Vb
 3. Middlesex Chronicle, 7.5.48.

In view of the bad acoustics, a further meeting of the Divisional Executive was arranged for the 18th May, to which the CEO and the County Education Committee Chairman would be invited.

The minutes of the above very inadequately reported meeting of the South West Middlesex Divisional Executive reveal that the Acting Divisional Officer's Report¹ included a resolution passed by the local teachers at a meeting held on 13th April, immediately after the advertisements for posts in comprehensive schools had appeared:

"That this meeting of the South West Middlesex Teachers' Advisory Panel, having noted the advertisement in the 'Times Educational Supplement' dated April 10th with respect to appointments in comprehensive schools in this Division, wishes to protest against the complete lack of consultation with the teaching staffs affected by the establishment of such schools."

The Panel expressed

"... confidence that the Divisional Executive will give the matter full and sympathetic consideration."

In addition, the Acting Divisional Officer also read a Resolution received from the South West Middlesex Head Teachers' Association². There ensued considerable discussion, during which it was proposed that the Divisional Executive should rescind its earlier resolution which had supported the County Council's policy, as that policy was "no longer representative of the will of the people...". However, this motion was not put; instead the Chairman's motion, seconded by the Vice-Chairman, was carried:

"That the proposal of the County Council to establish comprehensive schools in South West Middlesex in September 1948 be referred for detailed consideration to the next following meeting of the General Purposes Committee, to be held on Tuesday, 11th May, 1948, at which latter meeting the Divisional Executive shall invite the Chairman of the County Education Committee and the CEO, to be present."³

Perhaps the Chairman found the presence of the public a little embarrassing (despite the fact that no-one could hear very well). A meeting of the General Purposes Committee would be held in private!

1. SWM/Div.Ex/4.5.48, p.225.

2. Ibid, p.216, Minute 14. Text of resolution not given.

3. Ibid, p.217.

By the following week the pupils of Keats School came into the battle. A petition signed by 79 Fourth formers was forwarded to the Middlesex Education Committee. It stated¹:

"We, the undersigned, pupils of the 4th Forms of Keats Grammar School, do hereby protest against the dismissal of the Headmaster and the possible dismissal of other members of the Staff for the following reasons:

- (a) We feel that the changing of staff would seriously interfere with General Schools examination and the Matriculation Certificate which we are due to take in the summer of 1949.
- (b) We all have a sincere regard for the members of the staff. We also protest against the conversion of Keats Grammar School into a comprehensive secondary school."

In the same issue of the Middlesex Chronicle there appeared five letters. The Chairman of the Parents Committee called attention to a Public Meeting on 19th May; invitations had been sent to the Middlesex County Council and Education Committee, and it was therefore hoped that the aims of comprehensive schools and their conduct would be placed before the meeting prior to any resolution being moved. A lady graduate drew attention to the fact that the largest teachers' union had recently balloted its members in the district, the overwhelming majority voting against the September experiment². When parents at the recent public meeting asked for all the information that the teachers could give them, "why was this vital evidence withheld from them," and "will some member of the union in question let the public know what those figures were," she asked. Another correspondent had been informed that a certain Headmaster, a well-known Communist, was among the chief advocates of comprehensive schools and concluded "... one can to some extent judge a scheme by its sponsors." Yet another one asked who a certain gentleman was who was constantly mentioned as one of the chief supporters of the comprehensive school. The Editor informed his correspondent that this gentleman was Headmaster of a County Grammar School in Middlesex and a past President of the NUT. Like other teachers, he had spoken in favour of comprehensive schools at public meetings during the past eighteen months.

1. Middlesex Chronicle, 14.5.48. This appeared at the bottom of the front page. Title: "Keats School Pupils' Protest".

2. Ibid, 14.5.48.

The NUT Divisional Secretary confirmed in an interview that the particular Headmaster was a Communist, and was one of those who had pressed the MOTA to prepare and present a statement on comprehensive schools to the County Education Committee. Thus a Communist label was used as a stick with which to beat the Labour Councillors' comprehensive school policy.

Then there was a contribution from a local teacher, the only letter in these weeks that argued the case, at length, in favour of comprehensive schools. He pointed out that there had been no opposition to the County's policy from members of the Divisional Executive¹ when that policy was incorporated into the South West Middlesex Development Plan. The local Plan was published in December 1946. The educational needs of the area were badly served: under 13% of children went to grammar school, against the County's average of 28%. The one grammar school catered for only 500 pupils. There was no provision for technical education. Many schools had still not been reorganised under the Hadow Plan. The Middlesex Chronicle had published his exposition of these facts in October 1947; no old Keats School pupils had protested then. The statement for and against comprehensive schools distributed by teachers at the recent public meeting had omitted two important points in favour: that the "iniquitous" eleven plus would become unnecessary; that the academically gifted, along with other pupils, would be provided with technical facilities. This letter also attempted to answer the criticisms of comprehensive schools on grounds of size, leading to loss of corporate life. On the contrary, children would get more individual attention because of the greater variety of courses available to meet their particular needs. Transfer would be easy, whereas between present schools it was not much in evidence.

However, even this teacher was by no means uncritical of the County Council. Whilst commending the early start - "if educational reform were delayed until conditions were ideal there would be no educational reform" -

1. The teacher writing the letter was a Labour member of the Divisional Executive in 1946.

he argued that¹

"The precipitation of the present crisis by the Middlesex County Council might have been avoided had their approach been more tactful and had they taken the teachers and parents into their confidence some time ago. Here our representatives on the County Council are at fault. They have been strangely silent about the whole affair..."

He further held that the district chosen for the experiment was unfortunate. In his own area, for example, a comprehensive school could have been started from scratch on an ideal site, with minimum upset to the present system.

On 21st May, the front page of the local paper was again very fully occupied by the Keats County Grammar School proposal. Two meetings had been held: one of the Divisional Executive, the other a public protest meeting called by the newly-formed South West Middlesex Committee of Parents. The Divisional Executive now took fright and - on a motion from its General Purposes Sub-Committee - moved and seconded by Conservative Councillors who had joined the Divisional Executive only that year, asked the Middlesex Education Committee by 13-5 votes for a postponement of the grammar school scheme because of local opposition and serious physical difficulties in setting up new schools by September². It was on this occasion that both the Acting Divisional Officer and the Vice-Chairman of the Divisional Executive referred to the earlier request that the grammar school should be left undisturbed until at least one comprehensive school was in a flourishing condition. Others pleaded for postponement. One speaker, regretting the protests made against attempts to get better education for the area, argued that many of these protests had come from teachers and that it would have been wiser had conferences been held to explain the proposed changes to the people.

Both the County Education Chairman and the CEO addressed the Divisional Executive; both pleaded with the Executive not to ask for postponement. The Chairman was concerned that at this late hour, the

1. Middlesex Chronicle, 14.5.48.

2. SWM/Div.Ex/Gen.Purposes Committee/11.5.48, Minute 5, p.30, shows that two Labour members tried in vain to prevent a decision being taken "until after the visit of the Chairman of the Education Committee and the CEO." This visit occurred the following week, when the Div.Exec. asked for deferment as recommended by the General Purposes Sub-Com.

County Council should be asked to think again. Until now, the Divisional Executive had backed the scheme, Ministry of Education approval of the building work was awaited any day. Theirs had not been a snap decision: much care and thought had been given. She could see no reason for the proposals being reconsidered and feared the consequence of reconsideration would be that comprehensive schools would not be started this summer. She was also dismayed to hear members talk about a grammar school and a comprehensive school running side by side. It was quite impossible. Comprehensive schools provided all courses across the whole ability range.

The CEO explained that at present the number of children who could get a grammar school course was limited by accommodation. If the area had a comprehensive school, this

"would give the opportunity of adjusting its course to the number judged to be suitable..."

In addition, the

"experiment was bound to run five or six years before one could get much conclusion from it. If the scheme was put off they would be so much longer getting the data they were anxious to get. In five years he hoped they would get the signal 'advance all along the building line'. It would be a tragedy if at that time they were still in doubt as to whether the schools should be organised and built as comprehensive schools or as separate schools - Modern, Technical and Grammar."¹

The withdrawal of Divisional Executive support for the South West Middlesex proposal concerning the grammar school occurred on the night of 18th May. It cannot have put the Chairman of the County Education Committee in good heart for the Public Meeting organised by the Parents and held the following evening in the School field - because the Hall was too small. The headline was most apt; the Chairman had been "Heckled"². It was, according to the former Chairman

"one of the worst political meetings I have ever attended. Short of rotten tomatoes being thrown at me, I had to stand all the abuse that was forthcoming."³

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1. Middlesex Chronicle, 21.5.48. Divisional Executive Meeting 18.5.48. In contrast to official Minutes of this meeting, which merely state that there was very full discussion, and then records the vote, the local paper gave a full report of this meeting on which the above account is based.
 2. Middlesex Chronicle, 21.5.48.
 3. Interview: Cr. Mrs. Beech.

She added that grammar school teachers from all over the County attended this meeting - that there had been a concerted whip-up because Keats School was seen by them as a threat to grammar schools throughout the County. The Chairman of the Parents' Committee, on the other hand, stated at the time, when opening the meeting, that it had not been engineered by the teachers¹.

The first speaker was the Headmaster of a County Grammar School in a neighbouring area. The fact that a Headmaster spoke against the policy of his employer, the County Council, made the County Education Chairman, the next speaker, most indignant. She was frequently interrupted and when she referred to the speech as "inflammatory and extremely foolish" and to the Headmaster as a "servant" of the Education Committee, there was an interruption: "Citizen". A master at Keats School asked the Chairman "if her remark regarding 'servants' was intended as a threat." She replied

"that it was not a threat, but she was tired of employees of the County Council - here she was interrupted by calls of 'cheek!' - using their position to stir up opposition."

It would seem that with such a reception, the Chairman's reference to the fact that the tripartite system wasted brains because children could not be divided into three types was hardly heard.

What the Headmaster had said was that the clever child would be handicapped in a comprehensive school and the other children would not reap any genuine advantage. Apparently the County Council had decided that²

"if all the children could not be swans they should all be geese. Teachers were drifting away from Middlesex, and if the County Council's policy continued Middlesex would be very fortunate if it was not black-listed by the teachers' unions."

The CEO assured the meeting that there was no intention to discontinue a grammar school type of education, but that in a comprehensive school selection would go on over a period and children would be assigned

1. Middlesex Chronicle, 21.5.48

2. Ibid.

to courses best suited to them. He was followed by Mr. Kenneth Lindsay, Member of Parliament for Combined English Universities, who said they

LR "should judge the scheme on whether there was going to be a lowering of the grammar school standard. There was a small county and needed the best brains they could get. If not they were sunk."

At this protest meeting, the following resolution was passed, which was sent to the Minister, to local councillors and the Middlesex County Council members.

"We citizens of South West Middlesex hereby protest against the introduction of comprehensive schools in this area as submitted to you by the Middlesex County Council, and we hereby invoke Sections 10, 11, 68 and 76 of the Education Act 1944."

The Chairman of the Committee of South West Middlesex Parents claimed that 500-600 had attended, only 25 voting against the resolution; that the meeting had been well advertised in the local press, by posters and the distribution of 10,000 handbills. He requested the Minister to receive a deputation¹.

The storm arising from this protest meeting was by no means at an end yet. Some people jumped to the defence of the Headmaster who had spoken. In one letter to the Editor it was maintained that he had

"made it quite clear that he was speaking not as a teacher but as a parent and ratepayer, and as such he has every right to express an opinion on this very controversial matter of comprehensive schools."

This correspondent added that reference to the Headmaster concerned

"... as a 'servant' was most irregular; surely the only 'servants' present at the meeting were [the Chairman] and [the CEO], who, after all are servants of the ratepayers."²

According to the NUT Divisional Secretary³, however, the Headmaster's speech was against the common law, which requires a public servant to refrain from acting against the interests of his master. By speaking publicly against the comprehensive proposals of his own employer, the Divisional Secretary held the Headmaster had laid himself open to severe punishment. Such views, he added, may be expressed through the teacher's

1. Middlesex Chronicle, 28.5.48.

2. Ibid.

3. Interview.

professional organisation, but not at a public meeting. The Headmaster was, in fact, severely disciplined by the CEO and almost lost his job. The NUT Divisional Secretary softened the blow by interceding on his behalf (the Headmaster was an NUT member), using the above argument that the teacher had spoken in his individual, not his professional, capacity. The intervention succeeded in preventing dismissal of the teacher because, according to the NUT Divisional Secretary, his cooperation with the LEA was highly valued. The CEO was warned by him that this cooperation would be withdrawn if an example were made of this man. At the same time, the teacher was told by his Union that they would be powerless to protect him in the event of the County Council deciding to press their case against him. The Divisional Secretary added that as a result of this whole affair, the County Council adopted a Standing Order that no officer was permitted to act against the policy of the County Council.

The NUT Divisional Secretary had not himself been present at this noisy meeting on May 19th. But two people who had been there were interviewed. Mr. Dove¹, who was Secretary of the MCTA at this time, called the meeting a "horrible" one. He had never seen the CEO treated as he was that evening by that Headmaster. This particular Headmaster and one Assistant Master at another Grammar School (School A) had been the two people who had rallied the Joint Four teachers in opposition to the proposals for Keats School.

"Through them the Joint Four throughout the County realised that if this sort of scheme ever materialised, the privileged position which they always had had in the grammar school was finished. They realised that they would then have to deal not with the cream only. ... Grammar school teachers did not want these children in their schools, nor did they want the old elementary school teachers coming into the Joint Four atmosphere. It was these people who organised the opposition from the floor at the meeting on 19th May, although the meeting itself was organised by the parents."

He added that the Headmaster had to be warned by the NUT afterwards

"that he would have to look out because he might lose his job. But it did not come to that."

The Divisional Secretary's account of the disciplining of the Headmaster was thus confirmed.

1. Interview.

Cr. Holly¹ had also attended the meeting. His wife had served on the Governing Body of Keats School before the war, and his two daughters had attended the School. Himself a teacher of mathematics, Cr. Holly knew the Maths Teacher at Keats School who had taught his daughters. This Master made an "impassioned" speech from the floor of the meeting. According to Cr. Holly, the Headmaster and the Second Master kept out of the battle and were very much in the background.

Another teacher (Mr. Sparrow) confirmed that the Headmaster of Keats School, although he supported his staff, would not himself have gone to any great extremes. He was near retirement and not in very good health. But he wanted to retain the grammar school as it had been built up. Mr. Sparrow², although Secretary of the South West Middlesex Teachers' Advisory Panel and a coopted member of the Divisional Executive, did not attend the meeting on May 19th. Asked why not, he related that in consultation with the NUT Divisional Secretary it had been thought advisable he should not attend. This was because the Chairman of the Parents Committee (responsible for the meeting) had got him into trouble. The leaflet which had been produced by the Teachers' Advisory Panel for their own earlier meeting called to inform parents³ had been reproduced by the Parents' Committee without asking permission of the teachers. It was therefore assumed by the LEA that the Teachers' Advisory Panel was linked with the Parents' Committee and was sowing dissent among teachers in South West Middlesex. As a result

"I was on the carpet before the CEO. I explained to him what had happened, and that we had no connection with the Parents' Committee. He accepted my explanation."

But in addition Mr. Sparrow asked the husband of the Vice-Chairman of the Divisional Executive to approach the Chairman of the Parents' Committee, the result of which was that the latter, in opening the meeting on 19th May, had categorically stated that the Parents' Committee had no connection with the teachers. Asked about the involvement of the Joint

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1. Interview.
 2. Interview.
 3. See page 246.

Four, as distinct from the Teachers' Advisory Panel, Mr. Sparrow said

"Yes, the Joint Four did support the Parents' Committee. They were glad about the Chairman's statement dissociating the teachers."

He added that only the local Joint Four teachers were involved - although they would have reported to the County Joint Four Committee.

"There was no reason for Joint Four teachers elsewhere in the County to be active. Their schools were not affected".

But Mr. Dove, who was actually present at the May 19th meeting, maintained that Joint Four teachers from other parts of the County were present at the meeting and involved in organising the opposition from the floor.

Thus two teachers were called to the CEO. The explanation of Mr. Sparrow was accepted, but the Headmaster concerned was severely disciplined. The May 19th meeting also had its repercussions at the County Council.

Labour members were indignant over the Headmaster's speech; one of them claimed that the protest gathering had been "a meeting convened under circumstances ... open to criticism."¹ One of the most active protesting parents, Mrs. R.B.L., took offence, writing yet another letter to the local paper to state that the meeting had been attended by a cross-section of the local residents, that no efforts were spared to publicise it and that both sides of the question were put before the resolution was passed². A little later, the Chairman of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, gave further vent to feelings about the protest meeting in South West Middlesex, which he had attended. It had been disgraceful. The audience had not been prepared to hear the CEO without interruptions; the Education Committee Chairman had been told by the organisers that she had a mere two to three minutes to speak on the County Education Plan, so that there had been no opportunity to explain the scheme. Meanwhile the petition against the scheme had gone round while the meeting was in progress. This Labour Councillor concluded,

1. Middlesex Chronicle, 4.6.48. Report of County Council Meeting held 2.6.48.

2. Middlesex Chronicle, 11.6.48.

clearly having grammar school teachers in mind:

"This has been engineered by people who are personally interested ... and we must fight them with their own weapons. They are afraid of losing privilege, and it is only from a personal point of view that they are opposing the scheme. It is time we took our coats off and went in to fight these people on their own ground..."¹

There had been many complaints that parents had not been consulted. One might say better late than never. On 1st June one meeting was held at a local primary school to explain the comprehensive school plan to parents. Another was announced at another school later that week. By this time the Byron School proposal had already been dropped because the buildings were incomplete. Parents were told that the Minister had authorised a number of comprehensive schools but that the County Council had not yet made a final decision on particular schools. The County Education Committee Chairman outlined the aims and opportunities offered by the comprehensive school. Eleven was too early an age to decide aptitude; all abilities would be given scope; a child good with its hands as well as its brain would be able to develop fully as it could not do in the present system. On grammar schools, she was reported to have said²:

"The Committee recognised the value of the education in the grammar schools and wanted them included in this experiment in order that whatever good there was in them should be available to all children and not limited to the few junior children who would no longer have in front of them a test by which their future would be decided."

She concluded that

"In comprehensive schools they would be laying the foundations of social unity in this country..."

The CEO stated that 18 of the 20 Divisional Executives in the County supported the Plan. There had been 300 applications for teaching posts available. His Assistant said classes should not exceed 35. These seem to have been statements by officers intended to inspire confidence.

Parents expressed concern that local children would be at a disadvantage, since employers preferred grammar school children. That same

1. Middlesex Chronicle, 18.6.48. Report of Education Committee Meeting held 14.6.48.

2. Middlesex Chronicle, 4.6.48.

lady, Mrs. R.B.H., had asked numerous questions but the Chairman did not allow her to move a resolution on this occasion.

At the eleventh hour, the South West Middlesex Parents, at another meeting, formed a Parents' Vigilant Committee. This was on 9th June, and on 11th the Secondary Education Sub-Committee of the Middlesex Education Committee deferred the County Grammar School proposal. The Vigilantes stated hundreds of residents had signed a petition against comprehensive schools and that their Committee was willing to obtain Counsel's Opinion as to the possibility of a High Court action against the County's Plan¹.

Over a period of six weeks, some fifteen letters to the Editor were printed by the Middlesex Chronicle - how many they received in addition is not known. The contents of some letters have already been referred to. Apart from drawing attention to particular protest meetings, or answering statements made by supporters of the comprehensive scheme, either at local meetings or at County Council level, these letters in a variety of ways argued the anti-comprehensive case. The following extracts are fairly representative:

The plan was felt to be "politically inspired, hence the haste."²

Instead of threatening the only grammar school of the area to see whether the idea is a good one, the same money should be devoted to improving existing schools. Special emphasis should be put on the modern school (argued Mrs. R.B.H.)

"so that it may reach the standard of the grammar school. If this were done 'parity of esteem' would be established between the different types of schools and interchange of pupils unsuitably placed in either school would be made more facile, and therefore the results of the scholarship exam would not be irrevocable."³

The same correspondent stated that parents wishing single sex schools would get no choice and that children from different districts would not mix - thus far from achieving 'parity of esteem', there would be snobbery as never before⁴.

1. Middlesex Chronicle, 11.6.48.

2. Ibid., 4.6.48.

3. Ibid., 21.5.48.

4. Ibid., 28.5.48.

"One has only to listen to the attitude of [the Chairman] to feel great sympathy towards the unjustly maligned teachers. ... their views should not only be invited but treated with the utmost respect. Had we not discovered this plot ... our children would have returned to school after the summer holidays only to bring home the disastrous news that they were now comprehensive school children - just like that! Seems to savour of the tactics of one named Hitler."

The same correspondent was worried about the effect for a child on leaving school of the

"degrading term 'comprehensive' after his name, when competing for a position with others who can claim to have attended a grammar school ... It follows that we shall in future be compelled to pay fees to a voluntary or private school in order to ensure a child's career..."¹

Another parent complained that no meetings for primary school parents, whose children would be the guinea pigs, had been held to hear the officials of the County.

"And what of this no grading? ... are those who learn a bit faster to sit and twiddle their thumbs or read library books while the others catch up?"²

Finally, what role did the Keats County Grammar School itself play? Certainly all the staff had publicly protested in their letter to the local paper. Reference has also been made to the role of the Maths Master at the meeting on May 19th. The form in which one parent enquired from the County Education Committee Chairman how the scheme would affect his daughter³ indicated that teachers at the school were telling pupils something about reorganisation. But what? 'Chronicler' had chatted to one of the elder pupils of the County Grammar School and

"found she was full of condemnation of comprehensive schools, but when I invited her to explain to me what was meant by comprehensive schools, she was unable to do so, and readily admitted that she did not know. She certainly had an idea that any change in educational methods would interfere with her schooling."⁴

When the Second Master was honoured after thirty years on the staff,

1. Middlesex Chronicle, 28.5.48.

2. Ibid., 4.6.48.

3. See pages 244-45.

4. Middlesex Chronicle, 21.5.48. 'Chronicler' was a reporter who worked at the local office of the newspaper and who tended very much to express his personal views (Statement by Editor, 9.9.66.)

at the School's Prize-Giving, the Heats School Headmaster made certain references to the controversy.

"...There was 'another matter' on which he could say 'more than a few words' but at present he was constrained to silence. He wanted to take that public opportunity of expressing his sincere gratitude for the magnificent and 'comprehensive' way (laughter) in which all had rallied round at this 'hour of premature change'."¹

Only a week later there appeared a letter from the same Second Master denying that the School had organised opposition to the County Council's policy. He noted the fairness with which the Middlesex Chronicle had reported the comprehensive school issue, but took exception to a statement printed in one edition that

"'opposition has come from the Heats County School'."

He explained that in June 1947, and again recently, the South West Middlesex Teachers' Advisory Panel, an elected body on which he was the grammar school representative, organised meetings which happened to be held at the County School. Further, that parents had hired the School Hall for their protest meeting. But

"the school as such has not protested nor organised the opposition."²

The NUT Divisional Secretary, however, thought differently. In an interview, he said of the Headmaster that

"he certainly used his position to whip up parents - I did not attend any of the meetings, but he certainly did that."

He added that the Headmaster was running a very good School, had been there a long time (since 1927 in fact), and had a vested interest in his own position there. Even the minority of NUT members on the staff at the School (he thought only two) were behind the Headmaster in opposition to the scheme.

The major part of the public campaign against comprehensive schools in South West Middlesex was now at an end. On 14th June the County Education Committee agreed to defer the proposal for the Heats and Shelley Schools to become a comprehensive unit. The other proposal for South West Middlesex, for Byron School, had already been dropped. Opponents of the

1. Middlesex Chronicle, 4.6.48.

2. Ibid., 11.6.48.

comprehensive schools in South West Middlesex must have felt a sense of satisfaction that their campaign had been crowned with success. No-one can have believed that the incomplete buildings of Shelleys School were the sole, even the main, reason why the County Education Committee "deferred" the scheme involving the Grammar School. Later the formal notices to five head teachers were withdrawn¹.

When the final selection of schools was made, the CE's Report to the Secondary Education Sub-Committee² had among other difficulties concerning this proposal stated that 140 qualified primary pupils usually entered the North Grammar School and that a large body of parents and children were opposed to the scheme:

"From indications given by the parents ... it is very likely that many of them will ask specifically for a grammar school, quoting section 76 of the 1944 Education Act, i.e. that children should be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents, and it would not be possible to meet such a request."

The assumption here made was that parents could refuse provision of an academic education within a comprehensive school.

However, Labour Councillors clung to the thought that comprehensive school plans would be initiated in the South West Middlesex area at an appropriate time in the future. Despite the setback in the summer of 1948, Labour spokesmen continued to claim that with teachers

"this new idea was fairly popular..., because there were 700 applications for jobs as assistant teachers... and 300 applications for headships"

at the five proposed comprehensive schools³. The South West Middlesex Acting Divisional Officer, on the other hand, told his Divisional Executive that he was finding great difficulty in staffing, especially where women teachers for secondary schools were concerned. There had been a crop of resignations at Byron School⁴. Advertisements had resulted in practically no applications. The Minister had advised recruitment of

1. SWM/Div.Ex/General Purposes Com./22.7.48, p.40.

Also report in Middlesex Chronicle, 30.7.48.

2. SESC/11/11.6.48, p.54.

3. Middlesex Chronicle, 18.6.48.

4. Ibid. Account of Divisional Executive Meeting held 15.6.48.

men teachers, as - although the Division was below its quota - the County was above its quota for women¹. This was grist to the mills of opponents to comprehensive schools; a member of the public at this Divisional Executive Meeting later wrote to the Middlesex Chronicle²:

"It is significant that as Byron School was until recently scheduled for a comprehensive school, there should be such a rush of resignations from that school, and rather seems to bear out a remark of another member of the Executive Committee ... that teachers seemed to be leaving Middlesex; ... the introduction of the (comprehensive) system would mean an exodus of the teaching profession from Middlesex."

In this connection the NUT Divisional Secretary's experience is relevant³.

"In 1948, my difficulty as NUT officer, at Byron School and two other proposed comprehensives - all modern schools organised in two departments - was not that teachers opposed comprehensive education, but that they were frightened of co-education."

He added that this was particularly true of women teachers who had worked in senior girls' schools. He thought women teachers at Byron School had threatened to resign. This recollection fits in with the Divisional Officer's statement that he was having special problems with women teachers in secondary schools.

On the other hand, Mr. Sparrow⁴, at that time Deputy Head of Byron School Boys' Department, did not accept this explanation. According to his recollection, the staff in the Girls' Department felt a strong loyalty towards their Headmistress. They assumed the new Headship of the mixed comprehensive School would go to the present Headmaster of the Boys' Department. All the teachers felt professionally insecure and objected to the complete lack of consultation.

The then Acting Divisional Officer (Mr. Whale) thought that at Byron School the assumption had been that the Headship would be between the two existing Heads, and there had been surprise when all the Headships were thrown open through advertisements.⁵

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1. Neither the Gen.Purposes Committee nor the Div.Ex.Committee Minutes of the S.W.Middx.Div.Ex (meetings held 15.6.48) refer to these resignations! Another case where local newspaper reporting gives a fuller picture of events than the official records.
 2. Middlesex Chronicle, 2.7.48.
 3. Interview.
 4. Interview.
 5. Interview.

It can be concluded, then, that the school teachers had professional fears in connection with the early comprehensive proposals. Grammar school teachers were concerned to preserve the grammar schools and the particular type of teaching to which they were accustomed. To this the comprehensive school was a direct threat if it was accepted that comprehensive schools would provide for the full range of ability among children. Modern school teachers were less concerned about the threat of the comprehensive school as such, but they were concerned about lack of consultation, about the fate of present head teachers and about the inconvenience of transfers. Some women teachers may also have feared the prospect of teaching mixed classes in a coeducational school.

Whilst the public agitation subsided after June, the members of the South West Divisional Executive continued to be occupied with comprehensive school policy. After all, their draft Development Plan, submitted to the County Council in December 1946, proposed six ten-form-entry comprehensive schools for the area. Two Conservative Urban District Councillors who came on to the Divisional Executive in Spring 1948 had already been particularly vocal against comprehensive schools, but it was not until after the summer break that the whole matter was fully discussed. In September, the newly appointed Divisional Education Officer explained to the General Purposes Committee that he had been at pains to acquire information on the difficulties of the existing situation in order to comprehend the problem and thus be in a position to give the Committee advice¹.

The Report of a meeting of the General Purposes Committee held in the middle of October is of interest. The new Divisional Officer had evidently concluded that it was of paramount importance to concentrate pressing for new school buildings - the area had a rapidly growing population - and to settle later the type of education to be provided therein. The meeting was a special one to discuss secondary education².

1. S.W./Div.Ex./General Purposes Committee/21.9.48.

2. S.W./Div.Ex./26.10.48, pp.21-22, incorporating Minutes of Special Meeting of General Purposes Sub-Committee on Secondary Education, held 13.10.48.

"The Divisional Officer re-iterated that the great need of the area was for new buildings and he felt that we should press for the buildings and discuss the type of education to be provided therein later, when they have been erected. He could see no reason, however, why a school originally scheduled for a comprehensive school could not easily be transformed into a grammar or technical school."

Several members agreed that it was most urgent to press for buildings and that therefore

"at this stage, no useful purpose would be served by discussing the merits and demerits of the comprehensive school."

One member disagreed - it was

"important to stand firmly against the comprehensive school ..."

but the Vice-Chairman pointed out that as the Development Plan included the provision of comprehensive schools, either this had to be accepted, or a new plan would have to be prepared.

"The Divisional Officer stressed that any proposals put forward for new schools must conform with County policy."

Nevertheless, the meeting instructed the Divisional Education Officer (by 11 votes to 4)

"to seek authority from the County Council to proceed with the re-casting of the Development Plan for secondary education,"

and it was made quite clear that the Divisional Executive

"would not favour the establishment of a comprehensive school that meant the absorption of Keats County School."

When later the same month the Divisional Executive considered and adopted this Report from its General Purposes Sub-Committee, the following instruction to the Divisional Officer was added¹:

"that the Minister of Education be informed forthwith of the Divisional Executive's attitude in this matter, particularly with regard to the fact that they do not consider that the Division could be adequately provided for technical education under a system of comprehensive schools."

The County Council was still under Labour control and comprehensive schools remained County policy until the 1949 elections although not yet approved by the Minister. Thus the Divisional Executive was requested by the Schools Sub-Committee to supply a detailed report on their

1. S.M./Div.Ex./26.10.48. Minute 92, p.12.

objections to the Development Plan for their area. By the time this request was considered by the Divisional Executive, the Minister's critical comments on the County Council's Draft Development Plan had been circulated to the Divisions. Thus the following motion was adopted¹, stating that the Divisional Executive

"is convinced, from an intimate knowledge of local circumstances including existing secondary provision, the educational needs of the area with specific reference to Technical Education, the geographical distribution of the population and the existing transport facilities, that the development of secondary education based on the comprehensive system would not adequately meet the legitimate requirements of the children of the Division because there is a greater need for the specialised training given in secondary schools of the Grammar and Technical type than could thus be satisfied."

The Development Plan was to be revised to

- "1. Provide increased facilities for Technical and Grammar school education.
2. Include provision for a rising child population, due not entirely to an increase in the birthrate but to an influx from outside districts.
3. Adopt a system of Secondary Modern Schools plus secondary schools organised on a bi-lateral principle providing for Grammar and Technical Education side by side."

Thus it may be concluded that in the South West Middlesex Division of the County, the row over the proposal to merge their only grammar school into a comprehensive unit with a secondary modern school led ultimately to a rejection not only of this particular scheme but of comprehensive schools in general. Thus this Divisional Executive must have welcomed the outcome of the 1949 County Council election because change of control from Labour to Conservative resulted in the adoption at County Council level of a secondary schools policy which was in accord with locally expressed views, thus facilitating the revision of the Development Plan which was desired.

1. SWM/Div.Ex./22.2.49, p.47 and 48.

(c) Conservatives Fight for a Comprehensive School

"When the Chairman of the Education Committee first addressed parents in this area there was a mixed expression of opinion from them, but this appears gradually to have crystallised into a very definite majority of parents who would welcome the establishment of a comprehensive school in the area. The teachers of the area also appear generally to be in sympathy with the proposal."¹

What a contrast to the story just related! Undoubtedly the important initial difference was that this area of Middlesex had no grammar school. Children had to travel considerable distances to attend grammar schools. On the other hand, the manner in which the proposal for a comprehensive school was initiated no doubt contributed to the favourable response it received. Each step seems to have been taken a little earlier than in South West Middlesex, and above all meetings of parents to explain the scheme were held before opposition arose.

The fact that the Chairman of the District Education Committee (Cr. Hare), who also represented the area on the County Council, supported the establishment of the comprehensive school, was another helpful factor in the situation. Cr. Hare voted for the Conservative amendment at the meeting of the County Education Committee on February 9th, 1946, that Divisional Executives should approve particular comprehensive schemes for their area. Only in this way, he thought, would schemes start in circumstances conducive to success². Anyway, in the area of Blake School this local approval was forthcoming.

Cr. Hare had been elected to the County Council as a Ratepayers' representative in 1946, but described himself recently as

"distinctly Conservative - although pinkish shall I say!"³

1. SESC/11/11.6.48, p.54. CEO's Report to Sub-Committee making final choice of schools to become comprehensive in September 1948.

2. Barnet Press, 14.2.48.

3. Letter to author from Cr. Hare, 21.2.67.

Although he had originally wanted a grammar school for the area, when the Chairman of the County Education Committee approached him as to whether the area would accept a comprehensive school, he agreed because there was no local grammar school and because of his

"total disagreement with the 11 plus examination".¹

The eleven plus meant that

"many children who on the appointed day were unhappy in health, or the examination papers just unlucky for them, although probably very intelligent, were forced to go to a technical school, and the lucky lucky pupil quite erroneously was sent to a secondary school."²

Once the mistake had been made with regard to a clever pupil at the wrong school, he added, the pupil would have to be exceptionally good for a transfer to be made. In the comprehensive school this difficulty did not arise. However, whilst in favour of the specially built comprehensive school, Councillor Hare was

"totally opposed to doing away with the old established Grammar School."

The local Urban District Council traditionally had a Ratepayers' majority, but after the war the local Conservative Association became extremely active in recruiting members. Within three years Conservatives gained a majority on the Urban District Council. The Barnet Press³ in April 1948 reported that the "sensation" of the Urban District Council election had been the overwhelming victory of the Conservatives. In their first all-out effort, they had won all five seats, three from previous Ratepayer and two from previous Labour councillors.

Just as Conservative gains in the 1948 Urban District Council elections had influenced the composition of the South West Middlesex Divisional Executive, so Conservative gains in this Urban District affected the composition of the District Education Committee. Conservative Party as distinct from Ratepayer influence on the District Education Committee was further strengthened when the County Council also came

1. Letter to author from Cr. Hare, 3.2.67.

2. Ibid., 21.2.67.

3. 10.4.48.

under Conservative control in 1949. Late in 1948 the Conservative Party told Cr. Hare that he must either serve as a Conservative County Councillor or they would fight him in the forthcoming election. Cr. Hare refused to stand as a Conservative candidate¹. The Middlesex County Council seat was therefore contested by a Conservative (Mr. Stag), who replaced Cr. Hare both on the County Council and as Chairman of the District Education Committee.

But before relating in more detail how Conservatives squeezed out Ratepayer representatives - and the importance of this for local secondary schools policy - it is necessary briefly to describe the area and its District Education Committee. The Urban District was the smallest local authority in Middlesex. It was separated from the rest of the County by part of the Green Belt around London. It was a dormitory area for metropolitan commuters - in 1958 13% of the adult population of 16,000 left daily by rail for London. Local employment was available for only some 5,000 in that year. During the 1950s, population expanded. At the 1951 Census there had been just over 17,000 people; by 1961 there were over 23,000. Two large new housing estates were established by two older Middlesex Boroughs, which acquired land by compulsory purchase. The Urban District Council was in conflict with Middlesex County Council over this matter because it did not want these people to come to the area². Cr. Stag stated that the Urban District had through these two schemes lost building land for over 1,000 houses³. By "lost" he presumably meant that instead of Council Estates being built by two old-established working-class Boroughs for purposes of overspill, the land might have been used for local Urban District Council or private building.

The District Education Committee was made up of representatives of the County Council, the Urban District Council and of Co-opted members. Two co-opted members were teacher nominees, and in the early post-war years the Headmaster of the local secondary school was one of them. The other two co-opted members were local residents who indicated

1. Letter to author from Cr. Hare, 21.2.67.

2. Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London. Minutes of Evidence 31, HMSO, 1959, pp.1264 and 1270.

3. Interview.

interest in the work of the Committee. In years when more than two residents offered to serve, the Committee filled these two co-opted vacancies by taking a vote. The District Education Committee was a Sub-Committee of the County Education Committee, and did not exercise delegated powers under a scheme of divisional administration as Executives did in other parts of Middlesex. It nevertheless exercised great influence over the type of secondary school provision made in the area.

It was to this District Education Committee that the CEO in February 1948 suggested that the Blake Secondary Modern School should become a comprehensive in September of that year. Entry was to be non-selective, but existing pupils were to complete their present courses. Consideration of this matter was referred to the District Education Committee's Development Sub-Committee, which within a month reported back in favour of the scheme¹. It should be mentioned at this stage that the local Development Plan adopted in the previous year² had included provision of two comprehensive schools, the first to be erected on a local estate³. The local Committee had stressed the urgency of building the first comprehensive school immediately the Ministry of Education approved the County Development Plan.

Acceptance of the County Council's proposal that Blake School become a comprehensive in September 1948, it was hoped, would assist the area in proving the early need for the new Secondary School. Accordingly a unanimous recommendation was made by the Development Sub-Committee⁴:

"... that the County Council be informed the ... District Education Committee is in agreement ... that a comprehensive secondary school shall be established at Blake School, as from September 1948,"

until new accommodation is provided on the Eliot Estate.

Why did the District Education Committee consider that the building of their new secondary school would thus be speeded up? They knew that their needs had to be weighed along side those of other areas in the County.

1. E/PB/6, 2.2.48 and 1.3.48.

2. Ibid., 31.3.47.

3. Eliot School was later built on that site as a brand new School. Ultimately the buildings of Eliot School and Blake School, which were near to each other, formed Eliot Comprehensive School, under a single Headmaster, after some years during which Blake buildings had been used as a junior school.

4. E/PB/6. 1.3.48.

It so happened that pressure on secondary school places in this area was eased by the fact that a high proportion of the secondary school children attended grammar schools in neighbouring areas. On 1st April, 1946, for example, there were 346 local children at secondary schools in other areas, and only 333 at the Blake Secondary Modern School. By attracting local children into their own secondary school, not only would fatiguing journeys be avoided for the children, but the accommodation at Blake School would prove inadequate at an earlier date than otherwise. The local committee, therefore, wanted a grammar-type of education to be available locally so as to keep these children at school in their home area.

Indeed, in the early days of planning after the war, the District Education Committee had envisaged that the site for the new school should be acquired to accommodate a grammar school. Throughout 1946 this was the expressed wish of the local Committee¹, until in October the County Council's new secondary schools policy adopted in July 1946 was considered. The local Committee then found itself in agreement with the views and recommendations contained in the Middlesex Education Committee Report and decided²

"to include in the development plan for the District the proposal that Secondary Education ... should be provided in a Comprehensive School capable of accommodating upwards of 1,800 children."

Early in 1947, when detailed attention was given to proposals for inclusion in the Development Plan, it was suggested that³

"a common secondary school should be erected on the ... site and that in view of the possibility of further secondary common school accommodation becoming necessary to meet the needs of all children who might eventually be living in the District..."

a second school site be earmarked for this purpose. As soon as Eliot premises were available, Blake School was to become a junior school.

The following month two reasons for accepting the common school - in which courses of education similar to those given in grammar and

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1. E/PB/6. Meetings held 4.3.46, 23.5.46, 1.7.46.
 2. E/PB/6. 7.10.46.
 3. E/PB/6. 6.1.47.

technical schools would be offered - were recorded, and these were reiterated in the District's Development Plan and again in March 1948 when the immediate proposal for Blake School was discussed¹:

- "(a) It will eventually result in the abolition of the Entrance Exam with all its restricting influences
- "(b) It will provide the means of securing that full secondary education which [the area] has long demanded."

At the same time, the local committee was early aware that²

"it is very improbable that all the parents would send their children to Blake School, some preferring a Grammar School in neighbouring areas until the efficiency of the Common School is proved"

or again³

"The response in the current year will probably be small but the important fact will be that the academic education for the brighter children will be available ... and the demand for places will grow as the school proves itself a success. A certain amount of prejudice will probably have to be overcome. ..."

However, it was the case that pressure on the nearer grammar schools and pressure on bus routes had made it increasingly difficult to get children to grammar school areas satisfactorily and this had already caused some parents to remove their children from distant grammar schools, placing them in Blake School instead⁴.

No wonder, then, that the CEO reported in June to the County's Secondary Education Sub-Committee that this area was educationally extremely well suited to the establishment of a comprehensive school. Except for grammar school places, it was self-contained. Children had to travel five or more miles to attend grammar schools, and some qualified children had after a year or so been withdrawn from these distant schools⁵. No wonder, either, that Blake School was put at the top of the list of schools chosen to be turned into comprehensives that September.

1. E/PB/6. 3.2.47, 31.3.47 and 1.3.48. The quoted extract is the 1948 version.

2. E/PB/6. 3.2.47.

3. E/PB/6. 1.3.48.

4. Ibid.

5. SEESC/11/11.6.48, p.54.

Meanwhile, the County Education Committee Chairman (Cr. Mrs. Beech) had already in mid-March addressed two meetings of primary school parents. Those at the secondary school had had the comprehensive schools policy explained to them a year earlier, at Blake School Open Day in July 1947. There the snags of early selection had been stressed, including the "blot on the family escutcheon" where children failed to pass the eleven plus. According to the Barnet Press¹ there had been applause when Cr. Mrs. Beech had concluded

"The County believed that, at the present stage, the best provision they could make was in comprehensive schools."

The primary school meetings were arranged to explain to parents the Education Committee's views and to hear parents' reactions. Cr. Mrs. Beech outlined the scheme for Blake Comprehensive School. The area could supply a cross-section of the child population which a comprehensive school needed, the buildings of Blake School were suitable, and the staff, with some additions, were competent to carry through the proposed scheme. Referring to children who had recently taken the entrance exam, Cr. Mrs. Beech said parents of those reaching a certain standard²

"would have the choice ... of sending their children to the new comprehensive school, but they would equally be able to say they wished the child to go to..."

a nearby grammar school. The Committee

"hoped that a great many of the children who qualified would go to Blake School. 'We really want to make a success of this venture. We are determined that the children who go to Blake School should have all they could have had had they gone to one of the grammar schools'."

Not that it was

"intended that all children should receive a grammar school education, but in the new school they would have the opportunity of finding out themselves those things in which they were interested, and would be given the opportunity to develop their talents."

Unless a better site could be found, the one already earmarked for the

1. Barnet Press, 26.7.47.

2. Ibid., 20.3.48.

purpose would ultimately be the site of a new secondary comprehensive school.

Both Cr. Mrs. Beech and the Assistant Education Officer of the County Council answered many questions. Cr. Mrs. Beech regarded the meetings as explanatory and hoped no vote would be taken. At the primary school where the first meeting was held

"one parent suggested that the whole idea was purely makeshift and that the meeting was against the scheme. There were, however, several members of the audience who welcomed the scheme."

At the other primary school meeting, reported the Barnet Press,

"The scheme was favourably received."

It is interesting that the parents at the first school were given further information about the comprehensive school system only a month later. According to Mrs. Crane¹ it was on the suggestion of the Headmaster of Blake School that Mr. Emrys Davies, the Secretary of the NUT Education Committee, was invited to give a talk on the detailed advantages of comprehensive schools. At the end of the meeting the honorary Secretary of the School's Parent Teacher Association said²

"The Association would do all in their power to ensure the success of the new school."

Thus by mid-April, parents at both primary schools were in support of the proposed secondary school reorganisation. This was the time when the issue of staffing became crucial in setting off protests in South West Middlesex.

When the Headmaster of the Blake Secondary Modern School received his letter of formal notice in April there was no fuss. Cr. Mrs. Beech said that³ - unlike in South West Middlesex "where staff and head were not with us" -

"... the Headmaster of the School ... came to me saying he could retire in two years time. If it would help at all in the experiment, he would be prepared to retire straight away..."

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1. Interview: Mrs. Crane was then Headmistress of the primary school in question. In 1950 she married the Headmaster of Blake School, and had many recollections of the starting of the comprehensive school.
 2. Barnet Press, 17.4.48.
 3. Interview with former Chairman of County Education Committee.

This Headmaster was a keen supporter of the comprehensive school, had addressed meetings at primary schools all over the County and was active on the issue within the MCTA¹. The local paper made no reference to the letter of dismissal. Even the District Education Committee at the beginning of May merely noted "for information" the fact that the CEO had written two letters to the Headmaster², both dated 23rd April. The first was for the information of the Assistant Teaching Staff and read:

"As you are aware, it is proposed, subject to the approval of the Ministry of Education, to organise your school as a comprehensive as from .. the Autumn Term 1948. You will appreciate, I know, the necessity for certain modifications in the staffing arrangements at the school. In the main it is expected that these will consist of additions to the assistant staff, although it may be necessary for certain transfers to be made. Such transfers will not be carried out until the individual teachers concerned have been consulted and full consideration has been given to the teachers' expressed wishes.

" It will not be necessary for any member of the staff to apply for a post if he/she desires to remain in his/her present school. Should any teacher wish to apply for a post in any other school he/she should complete an application form in accordance with the terms of the advertisement."

The second letter was marked personal for the Headmaster and its substance was the same as that sent to the Keats School Headmaster and subsequently published in the Middlesex Chronicle³. Having noted these letters, the District Education Committee Minutes merely record that⁴

"In this connection it was unanimously decided to recommend that this School be known in future as 'Blake Secondary School'."

A couple of months later the District Education Committee "unanimously instructed" its four representatives who were to confer with representatives of the Middlesex Education Committee, "to urge the re-appointment" of the present Headmaster⁵. In September the local Committee congratulated him on his re-appointment⁶.

1. Interviews: Mr. Dove and Mrs. Crane.

2. E/PB/7. 3.5.48, p.7.

3. For text, see page 213.

4. E/PB/7. 3.5.48, p.9.

5. Ibid., 5.7.48, p.26.

6. Ibid., 6.9.48, p.41.

By that time the Barnet Press had reported that Blake School had been chosen by the County as one of the two schools to change its status in September. The reasons for this choice (as for the other School selected) were¹:

"There is a marked deficiency of accommodation in each area for children who have qualified for a grammar school education. There is no grammar school ... One effect of the decision .. is an increase in the overall County provision of secondary school courses of an academic nature.

"Each area can be reasonably well defined so that there is very little interference with the organisation of any other secondary school.

"The buildings are comparatively modern, and can be adapted, at least for the next two or three years.

"In each case there is a considerable body of local opinion in favour of the introduction of the comprehensive school."

Open Day at Blake School, like in the previous year, was again used to inform parents about the comprehensive school. Many parents and friends visited the school during the afternoon and evening, and packed the school hall for the Headmaster's speech. The "very great changes" would be gradual. With the help of parents, a good staff, accommodation and equipment, the new school could be a success. In future specialised teachers would be responsible for certain subjects; there would be a 5 x 30 form-entry in September and the children would receive a general education, including maths and languages. The second and third year children would be "guided into the right stream" by teachers who knew them personally. Children would be able to stay on to eighteen².

From local committee minutes and the press, it appears everything in connection with the comprehensive scheme proceeded smoothly. It was therefore of some surprise to hear from the former County Education Committee Chairman³ that the District Education Committee "was not very happy" about the proposal. But as the area was a very fruitful one for the experiment, and the local Committee was a Sub-Committee of the County Education Committee with less power than a Divisional Executive, the County went ahead. At a later stage when the District Education

1. Barnet Press, 19.6.48.

2. Ibid., 24.7.48.

3. Interview: Cr. Mrs. Beech.

Committee fought for the preservation of Eliot Comprehensive School against considerable pressure from the Conservative controlled County Council, the then District Education Committee Chairman (Councillor Stag) claimed¹ that

"...Eliot School had been erected as a comprehensive school on the insistence of the County"

and that originally there had been

"opposition not only from local parents but from members of the District Committee..."

In so far as District Education Committee records may be relied upon, these recollections are not entirely accurate. It is, of course, possible that the District Education Committee Minutes do not reflect opposition which was in existence. It is, however, likely that both these people had uppermost in their mind the protests which arose concerning the comprehensive school in 1949, after Blake School had been established as a comprehensive. True, the erection of the new Eliot buildings began only after protests had been raised. It is these protests which now need examining. Those who organised them included outright opponents of the comprehensive school. But as an organised form of pressure the protests were in fact not directed against the comprehensive school as such, but against compulsory attendance there.

It will be remembered that appeals had been made to parents to opt for Blake Comprehensive School even if their children qualified for grammar school. Further, that the local committee felt parental prejudice would have to be overcome in this connection, and that the school would probably find it hard to attract such children in any significant numbers until it had established a reputation. However, in November 1948 the Labour controlled County Council decided that children in the three new comprehensive school catchment areas need not sit the eleven plus test - since all children would transfer on a non-selective basis to their local comprehensive school. This would have closed the avenue to grammar schools and given the comprehensive schools a "balanced intake".

1. E/PB/11. 14.8.57, p.58.

Conservative County Councillors had protested against this curtailment of parental choice. In the area of Blake School protests from parents were at their height between February and May 1949, after which they petered out because - as already related above¹ - the County Council rescinded its November 1948 decision.

It was evidently again at the same primary school where there had been some opposition earlier where unease first came to the surface. The same Mr. Emrys Davies from the NUT spoke at a Parent Teacher Association meeting there early in February 1949 about educational opportunity under the 1944 Education Act.

"At question time one parent suggested that responsibility was being taken from the parent, and that ... they were compelled, unless they moved from the district, to let their children go to the comprehensive school. 'We don't know how it is going to plan out' he said."²

Mr. Davies denied that under the comprehensive system the bright child would be held back - it would be helped and encouraged. It would be "no worse off, and in some things ... better off, than if he went to the grammar school."

As a number of parents expressed doubts about the comprehensive school, Mr. Davies said

"If we are not careful, we damn the thing before it starts. The whole system of education is entering an era of change; think of it rather as a change than a matter of experiment.'
"He urged parents to support the new school in its difficult task..."

Two weeks later the first letter appeared in the Barnet Press under the heading "'Iniquitous Scheme', say Parents"³. It was signed by the three officers of the newly formed Parents' Educational Rights Association (PERA). Local parents were asked whether they realised:

that their children could no longer take the County Test, but would automatically be transferred to Blake School;

that parents' wishes regarding choice of school as provided for under Section 76 of the 1944 Act would not be considered;

1. See page 232.

2. Barnet Press, 12.2.49.

3. Ibid., 26.2.49.

that there was no alternative to co-education;

that if paid-for secondary education cannot be taken up or continued by virtue of the parents' circumstances, there was no alternative to Blake School;

that their children would be subjects of a 'guinea pig' experiment which had been rejected by parents in other areas of the County;

that in the event of parents moving to another district, there would be no certainty of scholastic status.

The signatories invited the cooperation of all parents interested in contesting "this iniquitous scheme". The Parents' Educational Rights Association¹ had, in fact, held its inaugural meeting on 25th February, 1949, the evening before this letter appeared in the Barnet Press. Its "prime mover", a Mr. L.W.L., was elected Chairman by the fifty parents present. Clearly the newly elected Chairman had already been very active, at least during the preceding week. The evidence shows that he was opposed to the local comprehensive school, not merely to compulsory attendance at it by children in the catchment area. Letters had been written by him on 21st February to the Minister of Education, to a member of the local Ratepayers' Association, to the local Labour MP, and to Mr. R.A. Butler. The Minister was asked under which statute, regulation or order the LEA was empowered to "automatically transfer" children to the comprehensive school "without consideration for the parents' wishes as laid down in the Act." The local MP was informed that there was "very deep resentment among parents" in the area. As a similar scheme for South West Middlesex had been squashed, Mr. L.W.L. could see no reason "why similar instructions should not be given in regard to this district."²

Mr. R.A. Butler was approached as the originator of the 1944 Education Act and his assistance sought in "squashing this example of bureaucracy." Mr. Butler passed the letter over to the local prospective Conservative Parliamentary candidate, Mr. Ian Macleod, who at that time was also "an adviser on educational matters to the Party." Mr. Butler himself responded by expressing his doubts on schools of up to 2,000

1. For details of PERA as a pressure group, use has been made of a File of Correspondence and Minutes kept by its Officers at the time, which was loaned to the author.

2. PERA/21.2.49.

pupils as viable educational establishments. As the proposal for the comprehensive school had originated from the "Socialist controlled Middlesex County Council", it was suggested to Mr. L.W.L. that he and others could at the forthcoming County Council elections "register their disapproval and perhaps ... secure their overthrow."¹

The new organisation, PERA, had six committee meetings within the first month of its existence. The records contained in PERA's file show that the Committee used many of the usual pressure group methods. Literature was collected on relevant educational issues; contact was maintained with the three local newspapers and with organisations pursuing similar protests elsewhere in the County; the curriculum of a typical grammar school was compared with that of the local comprehensive school; approaches were made to the local District Education Committee and the Urban District Council, the County Education Chairman and the CEO, the Minister, MPs and the prospective Parliamentary candidate; an eye was kept on the legal implications - copies of the 1944 Education Act and the 1946 and 1948 amending Acts having been secured.

It is not clear exactly how PERA started, nor could any enlightening information be found about its leading personality, the Chairman, who had left the District. During the first week of PERA's existence, it became clear, however, that it could function as a pressure group only on one point, which was that all children in the area should be allowed to sit the Eleven Plus County Test, and thus have access to grammar schools if they passed. The Chairman called an emergency committee meeting on 2nd March and suggested that an open meeting might be addressed by a representative of the Grammar School Headmasters

"on the disadvantages of the comprehensive school system of education. The idea was discussed and it was considered that the airing of views to the disadvantage of the comprehensive school system was at variance with the Association's accepted policy."²

It was also made clear that the Association was being conducted on non-political lines. This was pointed out to Mr. Ian Macleod when he

1. PERA/7.3.49.

2. PERA/2.3.49.

approached the Association's Secretary. Meetings were arranged with both the sitting Member of Parliament (Labour) and with Mr. Macleod, the prospective Conservative candidate. The latter had expressed concern about the effects of the new comprehensive school on the

"education of children of the area, particularly those who aspire to grammar school status."¹

Subsequent to receiving a deputation, the Labour MP had heard from the Minister of Education (as had PERA) about the exceptions which Middlesex County Council were making in allowing certain children to take the County Tests, and that the Minister had reserved his position in the event of an appeal by an aggrieved parent. He therefore wrote to PERA's Secretary advising that any parent who wished his child to take an entrance examination should appeal direct "to the Minister and see what the result is."²

It must have been a very worrying time for the Headmaster of Blake School, but he continued to publicise the work of his comprehensive school. The Barnet Press gave an account of a well-attended meeting of the Parent Teacher Association at Blake School, addressed by the Headmaster, on the progress of the School³. He outlined the curriculum and explained that the 5 form-entry was made up of one class of grammar stream, one of slow movers and three classes of average ability children. Thus those children who had qualified for grammar school and whose parents had opted for the local comprehensive would not be held back. The staff situation was most encouraging - every advertisement brought a good choice of applicants. But here, too, even parents full of praise for

"the theory of the system - for those who wanted it,"
asked

"'why has there got to be that compulsion?'"

The Headmistress of one of the local primary schools (Mrs. Crane), who presided, indicated that they could not deal with that question, and

1. PERA/8.3.49.

2. PERA/12.4.49.

3. Barnet Press, 12.3.49.

when a parent suggested that a special meeting be called to 'thrash out the matter', she replied

"That is entirely your affair'."

Yet another parent held that

"children attending grammar schools had self-assurance and self-confidence. In future, children would be 'herded like sheep from .. [the primary] to [the comprehensive] ' and... the system would produce an inferiority complex."

Naturally the Headmaster disagreed - and the press report mentioned that he and two of his colleagues answered a number of questions privately at the end of the meeting.

The approach by PERA's Chairman to the local Ratepayers' Association resulted in one of their members, a local councillor, raising the matter on the District Education Committee. This was early in March. Parents had complained to him that their children would be prevented from attending grammar schools in neighbouring areas. Could anything be done about the County Council's policy, he wondered? The Chairman of the District Education Committee (Cr. Hare) was as County Councillor in close touch with developments on the County Education Committee; he now informed the local Committee that it had recently been decided that parents who could claim close family association with a named grammar school or preference for it on genuine denominational grounds would be given the opportunity to enter their children for the supplementary County Tests to be held shortly. Children who sat the supplementary examination and failed to get entry to the named grammar school would in September be transferred to the comprehensive school along with all other children in the District.

The Committee decided that all parents of children in the area who were at the age of transfer to a secondary school next September should be informed of the grounds on which special consideration might be given, and copies of the letter addressed to parents were to be sent for publicity purposes to the three local papers as well¹.

At the same meeting, plans and a model of the new comprehensive

1. E/PB/7, 7.3.49, pp.88-9.

school (Eliot School), which was to be built, were shown and explained in advance of their consideration by various County Council Committees. The local Committee desired that the County Education Committee Chairman and the Assistant Education Officer be requested to attend a public meeting to explain the project. Members of PERA, as well as other interested persons in the area, were invited to this meeting, held on March 14th¹. The meeting was attended by between 400-500 people and was addressed by the County's Assistant Education Officer. At a subsequent District Education Committee meeting², the Chairman (Cr. Hare) gave an account of this public meeting and stated that

"in his opinion, the majority of those present ... were in favour of the comprehensive school."

This very brief comment in the District Education Committee's Minutes gives a very inadequate picture of the well attended public meeting. Indeed, Cr. Hare himself recently recollected that out of some 450 people, about 425 were against the idea of the comprehensive school, and that only three members of the District Education Committee had supported him on the platform, some of the rest joining the audience³. This recollection probably exaggerated the opposition. The local press at the time made it clear that many of those present expressed grave doubts⁴. The opponents will have included PERA members and Roman Catholics. PERA had sent out a letter urging attendance:

"We cannot do everything for you and would stress the importance of you BOTH SUPPORTING US IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, thereby making it plain to the Authorities that WE OBJECT TO THEIR DICTATORSHIP. ... Please bear in mind .. that this Association has not called this meeting but nevertheless you are strongly urged to attend."⁵

Roman Catholics were also urged by the local Father to attend in force. In defence of parental choice of denominational schools, the Father supported PERA's protest against the "abrogation of parental rights."⁶

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1. PERA/ Letter 8.3.49.
 2. E/PB/7, 23.3.49, p.102.
 3. Letter from Cr. Hare to author, 3.2.67.
 4. Barnet Press, 19.3.49, and Herts Advertiser, 19.3.49.
 5. PERA/9.3.49. Their capitals.
 6. PERA/ Letter from RC Father, 13.3.49.

According to the Barnet Press¹ the Assistant Education Officer was interrupted several times during his speech and had to face a barrage of questions for nearly an hour and a half. During his speech, he asked parents not to cast their opinions lightly against the comprehensive school.

"...this arrangement is the only one which gives complete freedom of choice to the parent within the state system of education.'
(A voice: 'Rubbish')"

As regard the crucial question of compulsion,

"...there could not be a satisfactory 'set-up' in the comprehensive school without a grammar school course, and, unless there were a reasonable number of children with which to do it 'That would cripple the organisation of the comprehensive school.'... (An interruption: 'Now we are getting somewhere.') 'It can only function efficiently providing it has a reasonable cross-section of the children in this area.'"

"Pressed further on this point, the Chairman interjected with, 'I know feelings are fairly keen. He is our guest; he has no axe to grind,' to which someone shouted 'No'."

During question time when several people jumped to their feet at once, the Assistant Education Officer

"jocularly remarked 'I am only an official, you can make mincemeat of me. It would have been easy for me to have stayed away.'"

An accusation that he was biased he called

"'unfair' ... and added, 'The County Council have decided on the policy, and I have to do my best to implement that policy.'"

Questioned further about public opinion, he said that from the meetings he had attended he had formed the view

"that the majority considered that they would gain more than they would lose (Applause)".

And in response to the proposal that the Comprehensive School could go ahead, but that children could also retain the right to sit for the grammar school entrance examination, the Assistant Education Officer replied:

"'If you say your child should have the right to sit for this examination, you are, in effect, supporting what the vast bulk of teachers and parents have condemned for many years past - the selective system of eleven plus.'"

1. Barnet Press, 19.3.49.

During question time, the Chairman (Cr. Hare)

"was involved in a lively exchange of opinions with [another Councillor] ... a member of the Education Committee, who was in the audience."

The Chairman refused this Councillor permission to speak from the floor, as a member of the District Education Committee. There were cries of 'sit down' and 'stand up'.

The Herts Advertiser¹ reported the meeting equally fully, and estimated that, on the basis of the volume of applause and counter applause to answers given by the Assistant Education Officer,

"it appeared that the majority were on his side, but it was not very marked."

Back in the quieter atmosphere of the small District Education Committee, one of the members explained² that

"the opposition in the District is not directed against the comprehensive school but against compulsion to attend.."

To this the Chairman (Cr. Hare) responded by recalling that when the County Education Chairman had addressed public meetings in 1948, she had stated that

"choice of schools would be allowed for that year only in view of the fact that the secondary schools entrance exams had been held ... before the decision had been made to establish a comprehensive school in the District."

The implication clearly was that unselective entry to Blake School had not been sprung on the area, but the Chairman added that the County Council was now seeking Counsel's opinion on the right of parents to choose a school for their children. This fact had already been reported in the local press, where it was also mentioned that numerous protests included one from the RC Diocesan Schools Association³.

The correspondence columns of the Barnet Press over the period of these protests (February to April 1949) included some favourable and some unfavourable comments from parents. Protesting letters from individuals were variously signed "Barbarian", "Civilian", "Samson" and

1. Herts Advertiser, 19.3.49.

2. E/PB/7, 23.3.49, p.102.

3. Barnet Press, 19.3.49.

"Disappointed" - except for the letter from the officers of the Parents' Educational Rights Association, these correspondents chose to remain anonymous. "Civilian" wrote¹

".. it is already noticeable that the unruly and badly behaved element are gaining the upper hand, and it will, no doubt, please the sponsors of the scheme to know that they are managing very well to disseminate their doctrines as well as their disgusting bad manners amongst the others who have had the misfortune to have been nicely brought up."

A week later he declared that it was not the comprehensive school to which he and other parents objected, but the "deprivation of choice of school", and the Middlesex County Council's "dictatorial" methods².

Other protests were similar in character. "MT", who wanted the comprehensive school to succeed, and whose son was there in his first year, described the "shock" he had experienced when he had met boys ambling along the street after school eating fried chips! He concluded that some tuition on gentlemanly manners and conduct should be introduced at the School³.

Two mothers whose children attended the local comprehensive (one of whom had qualified for grammar school) wrote supporting the School⁴. One of them was doubtful of the substance of parental choice even when a child had passed the County Test for grammar school. On the question of choice of school, another correspondent felt that the LEA had made a mistake. Had it studied the psychological effect on parents, the scheme might have been introduced more gradually. The School, he thought, would have to prove itself first - then parents would choose it automatically.

The County Education Chairman in fact denied that the whole scheme amounted to a denial of parents' rights. Questioned at a meeting of the County Council by a Conservative member, she replied⁵ that the member talked

1. Barnet Press, 12.3.49.

2. Ibid., 19.3.49.

3. Ibid., 16.4.49.

4. Ibid., 12.3.49 (one mother), and 26.3.49 & 2.4.49 (another mother).

5. Barnet Press, 2.4.49. Report of County Council meeting held 31.3.49.

"as if there were an attempt to deprive parents of certain rights... That is far from the case. This is an attempt to give a great many children things which, in the past, have been denied. It is an attempt to relieve certain children of the necessity of sitting for a test at the age of eleven for a decision on the whole of a child's future life'."

Challenged that parents would not be able to choose a single-sex school, she added

" 'There are many parents who cannot exercise those rights, and who have no opportunity of choosing the secondary school to which they go, whether single-sexed or mixed'."

Meanwhile the 'Parents Protest' also caught the headlines, in the Evening News, but not without counter protest from local parents. The District Education Committee received the following copy letter¹ from the Honorary Secretaries of three Parent Teacher Associations - the Comprehensive School and the two Primary Schools in the area - addressed to the Editor of the Evening News on 16th March:

"We refer to your para headed 'Parents Protest' in your issue of March 16th 1949 which we consider is likely to mislead the general public. At no time have our PTAs associated themselves with any resolutions against the Comprehensive School or the non-participation of the Schools in the County tests. Further, at no time have we joined forces with any body on this matter. We shall be glad if you will give publicity to this disclaimer thus removing any misunderstanding which might prejudice the future of the Comprehensive School."

The "body", with which these Parent/Teacher Associations had not joined forces was the Parents' Educational Rights Association. This organisation now informed the District Education Committee that a Petition would be forwarded to the County Council, against compulsory attendance at Blake School, signed by both parents and non-parents².

"We would explain that non-parents are interested because they see no end to the restriction of the freedom of the individual if these proposals go uncontested."

The Association had also approached the Chairman of the local Urban District Council³, drawing his attention to

1. E/PB/7, 23.3.49, p.105.

2. Ibid, p.106.

3. Ibid, p.107.

"the fact that a number of parents have moved or are considering moving from the District to other parts of the County, where children may continue to enjoy the facility of the County West..."

Shortly after this, the Barnet Press¹ reported that PERA had 600 members and that at a recent meeting 60 had volunteered to act as canvassers to collect signatures for the petition to the County Council. By the middle of April, 1,000 signatures had been collected, and it was intended to canvass the whole District².

By the time the Petition was presented to the County Council, over 3,000 signatures had been collected³. A protest from the local Rate-payers' Association was submitted at the same time⁴. The Parents' Petition was referred by the County's Education Committee on 9.5.49. to the Schools Sub-Committee, but by that time it was overshadowed by Counsel's Opinion covering the whole question of Parents' Rights and admission of children to comprehensive schools, fully dealt with earlier. The accompanying letter in part read⁵:

"We present herewith on behalf of 3,078 residents ... a Petition to your Council expressing deep concern that children resident in this area are now deprived of the right to take the County test and pressing for the restoration of the right previously enjoyed."

The Petition made the objects of PERA supporters very clear:

"We, the undersigned, ... whilst raising no objection to Secondary Education on Comprehensive lines in this district, are deeply concerned that ... children are now deprived of the right to take the County Test whereby, if successful, they were given a choice of schools for their Secondary Education.

"We, therefore, petition the Middlesex County Council to restore this right forthwith, thereby giving practical effect to the intentions of H.M. Government as expressed in Section 76 of the Education Act, 1944."⁶

After presentation of this Petition against compulsory attendance at the Comprehensive School PERA disappeared from the scene as quickly as it had appeared. The Barnet Press of 28th May informed its readers

1. Barnet Press, 2.4.49.

2. Ibid., 16.4.49.

3. The 1951 Census (2 years later) showed the area to have a total population (including minors) of 17,000.

4. EC/90/9.5.49, p.113.

5. Ibid., p.114.

6. PERA Petition.

that local parents had that week received a letter telling them that their children might sit a special supplementary exam on 2nd June. It is clear that the Petition from the area had materially contributed to this decision - indeed the Schools Sub-Committee report (presented in closed session of the Education Committee) said¹

"In the circumstances now obtaining and having regard to further representations made by residents in the areas concerned and in particular to a petition received from a large number of residents .. your Sub-Committee decided that it was advisable to arrange that all children in the appropriate age group living in the catchment areas of the three comprehensive secondary schools ... should be permitted to take the entrance examination to grammar schools if their parents so desired."

But by the time the Petition reached the County Education Committee, the County Council had been re-elected and was controlled by the Conservative Group, whose Leader had shortly before the elections at a press conference referred to the complaints made in the District in these terms²:

" 'There is tremendous opposition from people who think as we do. It is, in my opinion, another idea of the Socialist conception of life to try and standardise everything. I think that is what men of character and personality object to'."

In the same interview, the Conservative Group Leader had made it clear that under a Conservative County Council there would be no extension of the number of comprehensive schools until results from the three already established were known.

Cr. Stag, the local Conservative candidate in this County Council election, stated that he had contested the election mainly on the issue of parents' rights³. But he had not been a member of PERA, he said. For him it was a matter of conscience that parents should have choice of school. The decision that he would contest the County Council elections in 1949 was made several months before PERA was formed. It was stated earlier that Cr. Hare had refused to stand for re-election under the Conservative label⁴, a decision he must have made soon after the comprehen-

1. EC/90/13.6.49, p.133.

2. Barnet Press, 19.3.49.

3. Interview.

4. Letter to author, 21.2.67.

sive school was started. For in October 1948 (the School opened as a comprehensive in September) it was announced that the Conservative candidate for the 1949 County Council elections would be Mr. Stag¹. The evidence shows that pressure was put on Cr. Hare by local (and perhaps also by County?) Conservatives either to accept the Conservative label or to make way for someone who did so.

Why were local Conservatives no longer content with Cr. Hare, a Ratepayers' man, who at the County Council was regarded as a Conservative member? The fact that the comprehensive school had by this time become a political issue in Middlesex was probably the main reason why Cr. Hare was no longer acceptable. He had, after all, supported Labour's efforts to establish the local comprehensive school, and at least some local Conservatives were clearly unhappy about this. Cr. Hare himself stated that "quite a big political issue" was made of the comprehensive school, and that the argument was about "levelling down":

".. there was at that time quite a good number of a rough class of youngsters, and you can .. understand the antipathy which those of the more ruly families felt in foreseeing the possibility that their youngsters would have to mix with the rough element."²

Cr. Hare had been the President of the Ratepayers' Association, and when he resigned in the autumn of 1948, he expressed the hope that the Association would³

"always adhere to its non-party policy."

His successor as President seemed to agree, but it was a forelorn hope. He said

".. it is a pity that [the area] has decided that party politics should come into its Council."

The Association's Secretary said that at the present time the majority of electors desired party political candidates in local elections.

A new chapter now opened, as far as Blake School was concerned. Control of the County Council by Conservatives brought in its train a different secondary schools policy. What would happen to this Comprehensive

1. Barnet Press, 16.10.48.
 2. Letter to author, 3.2.67.
 3. Barnet Press, 30.10.48.

School under these circumstances? Locally, too, there were changes; the District Education Committee acquired a new Chairman (Cr. Stag) who - like his predecessor - was the elected County Councillor for the area. Mr. Hare was still a member of the District Education Committee, but lost in a contest for the Chairmanship¹. For the Vice-Chairmanship there was also a contest². One of the local Conservative Urban District Councillors succeeded against a much respected local resident with great educational knowledge. This resident had supported - by sitting on the platform - the previous Chairman at the recent meeting on the Comprehensive School, at which the Assistant Education Officer had been subjected to interruptions and a barrage of questions, and at which one District Education Committee member, who clearly had not supported the Chairman on the platform, had tried to speak from the floor.

Among its other members, the District Education Committee now counted Mr. L.W.L., the very same who had been Chairman of PIERA. He topped the ballot for one of the two vacancies for coopted members from local residents offering their services, eight people having offered themselves that year. Clearly, then, in 1949 the local Conservatives were determined to reduce the influence of those members of the District Education Committee who had supported the comprehensive school. Four years later the man who had risen into the forefront of the District's public life during those weeks of PIERA activity, and who was personally at that time opposed to the comprehensive school, was to become one of the County Council representatives on the District Education Committee and its Vice-Chairman.

For the fate of Blake School it was crucial whether the new personalities would press at local level the new secondary schools policy of the Conservative-controlled County Council. The District Education Committee records for the next few years might lead one to conclude this. It was also stated by teacher colleagues that the Headmaster of Blake School for some time feared that the School would revert back to Secondary

1. E/PB/7/30.5.49, p.110.

2. E/PB/7/16.6.49, p.114.

Modern status¹. But, as will be shown, in due course the new Chairman of the District Education Committee as well as the former PIERA Chairman became the staunchest supporters of the local comprehensive school and its expansion, resisting all attempts by the County Council to give the area either a Grammar/Technical or a Modern/Technical School to accommodate the rising secondary school population. Here was a clear case where party politics cut across policy: Conservatives at County level were at variance with Conservatives locally.

But initially the District Education Committee fell in with the new County Council secondary schools policy for bilateral schools - Grammar/Technical or Modern/Technical - even in application to their own District. In July it was resolved to inform the CEO²

"That this Committee unanimously supports the Middlesex County Council's Development Plan for Secondary Education."

In October the CEO circulated to the District Committee the County Council's Report on Secondary Education and the Education Committee Chairman's Supplement thereto, setting out the Minister of Education's objections to the original Development Plan submitted in draft form when Labour had controlled the County Council. The District Education Committee was informed that the secondary school population, excluding newcomers, would rise to 1,600 with a leaving-age of sixteen by September 1960. It was - in the light of these documents and information - decided to inform the CEO that³

"if and when the Comprehensive School should no longer meet the needs of the District provision should be made for Grammar/Technical and Modern/Technical school facilities."

A month later the local District Education Committee approved the plans and proposals for the erection of the new Eliot Secondary Comprehensive School⁴.

In 1950, the Clerk of the District Education Committee reviewed the

1. For example, Interview - Mr. Dove.

2. E/PB/7/21.7.49, p.123.

3. Ibid., 3.10.49, pp.132-136.

4. Ibid., 7.11.49, p.142.

present and likely future child population. Clearly it was an area of population expansion; the number of secondary school places required by 1960, assuming a leaving age of sixteen, was now estimated at just over 2,000. There was also the fact that at present approximately 350 children were at secondary schools in other parts of Middlesex or in other Counties. The Clerk pointed out that when Eliot School was completed, the District Education Committee had to reckon with the possibility that fewer parents would want to send their children to distant grammar schools. Eliot School might eventually become a six form-entry School for 960 pupils, but clearly additional secondary accommodation would be required. Therefore the District Education Committee would have to consider¹

"building two additional secondary schools, each 3 form-entry ... One of these would probably be a Gram/Tech and the other a Mod/Tech. School."

In 1951, the revised Development Plan for the County was published². In it, the Secondary Schools for the District were set out as follows³:

Eliot School	Mixed	11-18	Comprehensive	850	5 f.e.
Secondary School*	Boys	11-16	Modern	510/680	3/4 f.e.
Secondary School*	Girls	11-16	Modern	510/680	3/4 f.e.

* Provisional proposals, dependent on building development in area.

There the matter rested until population forecasts again raised the issue of secondary school accommodation. This was in 1954. As mentioned earlier, two of the older Boroughs in Middlesex were building housing estates in the area. The District Education Committee pressed, in April, upon the CEO the necessity for another secondary school on one of the reserved sites⁴. In July it was agreed that this new school for 600/700 pupils would be needed by the autumn of 1956⁵. At the same meeting the District Education Committee decided that

"admission of children to Eliot School from other Districts, who don't qualify for a Grammar School, must eventually cease..."

1. E/PB/7/1.5.50, pp.177-179.

2. MCC Dev.Plan, as approved by the County Council on 31.1.51.

3. Ibid., p.83.

4. E/PB/9/1.4.54, p.124.

5. Ibid., 15.7.54, p.149.

because of pressure on secondary school places locally. Thus even though Eliot School was not yet attracting all the children qualifying for grammar school in its own catchment area, it was already acting as a magnet for eleven plus "failures" in adjacent areas. Between 1954-58 the District Education Committee evolved the practice, more and more strictly adhered to, of not admitting non-local pupils unless they had qualified for grammar school and their parents opted for the Eliot Comprehensive School. Such children were welcomed to give the school a "balanced" intake - making up for the locally resident children who qualified and whose parents opted for grammar schools in adjacent Middlesex areas. Eliot School was listed among Middlesex schools with a grammar school course of education, offering 30 places a year to children who 'qualified' in the County tests¹.

It was late in 1954 that the District Education Committee changed its mind about wanting a second secondary school to meet the needs of expanding numbers. The Committee proposed instead that Eliot School should be extended. The Report², making this recommendation, was signed by L.W.L.³, who was at this time Chairman of the Development and General Purposes Sub-Committee. It related that the Sub-Committee had given further consideration

"to the matter of secondary school accommodation in the District in view of the rapid growth which is now taking place. It will be remembered that the CEO has been advised that further accommodation will be required not later than the commencement of the Autumn Term, 1956, but your Sub-Committee now feels there is the possibility that this need may arise earlier and recommends that the CEO be informed accordingly and to suggest that it might be quicker and cheaper in addition to assisting the comprehensive secondary school scheme of education in the District if Eliot School is enlarged to provide accommodation for 1,300/1,400 pupils."

One is bound to ask whether it was speed and cheapness which weighed uppermost as the reason for this change of tune - or whether the after-thought that it would also assist the comprehensive school was really

1. See E/PB/9, 10 and 11, Meetings held 2.12.54, 28.7.55, 15.3.56, 7.6.56, 14.6.56, 17.7.58.

2. E/PB/9/2.12.54, p.177.

3. Formerly the Chairman of the Parents' Educational Rights Association.

the forethought. Later documentation seems to point to the latter - in the form of a fear that the building of a new, different type, of secondary school in the area would destroy the existing comprehensive school.

With this recommendation from the local Committee to the County Council there began a ding-dong between District Education Committee and County Education Committee, which between 1955 and 1958 was to involve four consultative conferences, a deputation and numerous exchanges by letter. In the end the County Council accepted the local Committee's wishes. Accusations were levied in the process that local schools were overcrowded and inadequate provision was being made for the influx of population. It is a moot point whether the dispute between District and County Education Committee delayed school building in the area.

When the District's recommendation came before the County's Schools Sub-Committee, the CEO's Report commented as follows¹:

"It has not been the policy in the past to approve the provision of schools larger than 6 form-entry. Apart from the question of policy, the Sub-Committee may feel doubtful of the wisdom of making large scale additions to the Eliot School which might spoil this very lovely building and would inevitably cut down the playing field accommodation. Proposals are provisionally included in the Development Plan for the erection of two further single-sex modern schools of 3/4 form entry."

The Schools Sub-Committee felt very careful consideration had to be given to the proposal. The District Education Committee was asked to be more specific on the estimated number of places required and on the form the extended buildings were to take. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee, the Chairman of the Schools Sub-Committee and one representative of the Minority Party were appointed to meet the District Sub-Committee. The meeting took place four and a half months later.

On the suggestion of the District Education Committee representatives (Chairman, Vice-Chairman and 2 local Councillors), the Conference was held at the Eliot School. All present had before them a joint report

1. SchsSC/11/18.1.55, p.89.

from the CEO and the District Clerk as background on the estimated secondary school accommodation required in the area. The Conference itself revealed the attitudes of the various representatives¹. The local Chairman, Cr. Stag, outlined suggestions

"whereby the necessary extensions of the Eliot buildings could be effected without detracting from the amenities of the school or encroaching upon the playing fields."

The other three local representatives suggested

"that the establishment of any type of secondary school in the District would destroy Eliot Secondary Comprehensive School and emphasis was placed on the special efforts which had been necessary to bring the comprehensive school to its present state of acceptance by ... residents."

On the other hand, the Conservative County Education Committee Chairman, who presided,

"called attention to the improbability of the County Council agreeing to enlargements in order to accommodate 1,700 to 1,800 pupils..."

whilst the CEO

"expressed the opinion that a second secondary school ... is necessary."

Eventually it was decided that the District Education Committee be requested to give consideration to

- (a) the use of the Blake buildings as a Junior Department of Eliot School;
- (b) the establishment of a secondary comprehensive school for girls in the Blake buildings, the Eliot buildings taking boys only, other accommodation being found for the displaced junior children now in the Blake buildings.

So at this stage, the County Council representatives appear to have accepted the determination of local representatives to retain a comprehensive secondary school system, even if it meant providing the extra accommodation required in two buildings by having either a Lower and Upper Mixed School, or two single-sex schools, using the Blake and Eliot buildings.

On the same date, in the evening, the local representatives met in

1. E/PB/10, Report of Conference held 2.6.55, p.23.

order to decide what recommendations to make to the County Council, and in this connection the District Education Committee at its next meeting unanimously approved that the additional accommodation required for secondary school pupils should be provided at the Blake School, which had been erected for secondary education purposes; that Blake School should be known as the Eliot Lower School and in general accommodate children between 11 and 13; that the present Eliot School should be known as Eliot Upper School¹.

This recommendation must have been before the Schools Sub-Committee later the same month. Neither the Minutes nor the CEO's written report make reference to the Conference which had been held, nor to the particular form of the proposals which the local District Education Committee had put forward as a result. Probably the CEO put these proposals verbally to the Schools Sub-Committee. In any case, this was the occasion when the County deferred for one year the whole question of the provision of secondary accommodation in the area concerned.

Meanwhile the Chairmen of the County Education Committee and of the Schools Sub-Committee were to visit the District and were to give a full report to the Schools Sub-Committee in September². There was no report given in September. Another six months passed before the Schools Sub-Committee discussed the matter again, and then because the District Education Committee representatives had pushed the issue.

It seems possible, even likely, that delaying tactics were used because the proposals were unpalatable. Not that this reason was argued by County to local Committee! The local Minutes³ suggest that the reason given for deferring the decision was that future secondary school needs could be more accurately assessed by then and meanwhile Hut accommodation at Blake School would be available for secondary school purposes

"so that there is no danger, by deferring the matter for the time being, a shortage of secondary accommodation may result which cannot be remedied."

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1. E/PB/10. Report of Conference in regard to Secondary School Accommodation, 2.6.55, pp.15 and 22.
 2. SchsSC/12/21.6.55, p.66.
 3. E/PB/10/28.7.55, p.28.

Nevertheless, the Local Clerk was instructed to advise the CEO that the District Education Committee

"is very strongly of the opinion that secondary education .. will not be served by delaying for twelve months a decision regarding the provision of secondary school accommodation."

Apparently no response was received to this. When the District Education Committee met in October, it heard that some of the new houses on one of the Estates being built by one of the Borough Councils had been occupied. Again representations were to be made that the matter should be reconsidered - the District Education Committee Chairman was to¹

"approach the Chairman of the County Council., ... of the Education Committee and the CEO with a view to an early meeting with Members of your Sub-Committee."

Such a meeting was arranged in November, this time at the Guildhall². The local representatives presented figures which showed that a hopeless situation would arise very shortly unless immediate action were taken.

"..after examination of our figures it was agreed that something must be done to avoid chaos in 1957."

The local representatives then outlined four different ways of solving their problem, all of which were rejected. One of these would even have led to the abandonment of the comprehensive experiment in the area, and was that Eliot School should become a grammar school and that a new secondary modern be built. This, it was pointed out,

"would not overcome our difficulties as a Grammar School would of necessity be open to all successful candidates in our group area and the numbers of our children who could be absorbed would be limited to those successful in the County test."

The other three methods were not new proposals: Eliot School was to be enlarged to take 1,600 pupils - rejected because County policy was not to create "mammoth schools", and the Ministry "would not look favourably" on it; Eliot School was to be the Upper, and Blake School the Lower, School - rejected because the County thought it undesirable to transfer large numbers of pupils after eleven plus; finally Eliot School and Blake School were each to become single-sex schools - rejected because

1. E/PB/10/20.10.55, p.43.

2. Ibid., 15.12.55, p.61. Report of Conference held at the Guildhall on 18.11.55.

the County would not approve

"the erection of another comprehensive school even in the special circumstances relating to our area."

So what was left? In fact the County put an ultimatum to the local representatives.

"We were ... informed that the only proposition which would be acceptable to the County was the conversion of Eliot to a Grammar/Technical School and Blake to a Secondary Modern School to take effect from 1957."

Help was assured to plan the conversion of Blake School and bring its facilities more in line with those at Eliot School, and in getting parents and pupils to accept the change. The County were also confident that the Ministry would allow Eliot School meanwhile to be used for a larger number of pupils than the approved 960. And so the District Education Committee resolved that the County Council be advised

"That a separate Secondary Modern School for boys and girls should be established at Blake School."

That was in December 1955. For the moment the County Council had won. But during 1956 the chart~~ed~~ course of action again changed. For one thing, a new group of protesting parents came into existence. But initially the Schools Sub-Committee confirmed acceptance of the above arrangement - the CEO's Report pointing out that¹

"This proposal is probably the best that can be suggested in the light of present circumstances,"

even though

"it destroys the idea of a 'community' secondary school... and will almost certainly mean that Eliot School will become selective even if only because of parental choice."

It would have meant that only one of the three comprehensive schools originally started in Middlesex would have remained; one of the others had reverted to Secondary Modern status in the early 1950s.

Between January and April, 1956, both sides agreed that Eliot School should be five form-entry, but take six form-entry during the peak years of 1957-62, and that Blake School should be three form-entry. In June

1. SchsSC/13/24.1.56., p.59.

a deputation from the District Education Committee to the County Council was received to discuss school accommodation - primary as well as secondary¹. It was then agreed, and endorsed by the Schools Sub-Committee, that two building projects should go forward immediately: provision of a specialist block at Blake School ultimately required to bring accommodation up to three form-entry standard, but to be used initially as additional classroom accommodation for Eliot School (the distance between the two schools was less than half a mile); and provision of a two-storey block at Eliot School eventually to be used for Rural Science but in the early period to serve as extra classroom accommodation².

Then, in the autumn of 1956, the question of provision for the area's secondary education was again in the melting pot. For one thing, the CEO informed all areas that the Development Plan was being revised, and that any recommendations in this connection should reach the County Council by early December³. This was referred to the local Development and General Purposes Sub-Committee. For another, a Parents Protest Group had been formed at an inaugural meeting held in September, attended by 150 irate parents at one of the local primary schools, and (with one dissident) the following resolution⁴ had been carried:

"That there should be accommodation provided at Eliot School for all Eliot pupils."

These parents must have known of the plans to use part of the Blake premises for Eliot pupils, and objected to this. The letter which their Chairman wrote to the District Education Committee also showed parental concern over school provision on the new Estates, built in the area by two Middlesex Borough Councils. The parents hoped the Chairman of the District Education Committee would attend a meeting at which they could

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1. One aspect of the situation was that pressure on primary school places which was already great would be accentuated by using Blake School as a Secondary Modern because when Eliot School had been occupied, the Blake buildings had been turned into a junior school.
 2. SchsSC/14/19.6.56, p.73.
 3. E/PB/10/20.9.56, p.146.
 4. Ibid., 18.10.56, p.157.

put forward their proposals. The Chairman agreed to meet the parents' group committee, but not to attend a public meeting.

Such a meeting was arranged shortly afterwards, and was subsequently reported on very fully to the District Education Committee¹. Of the delegation of nine, four had children at Eliot School, and the remainder at other local schools. The Chairman of the Parents' Protest Group thought the title of the Group was an unfortunate one.

"Originally he met a considerable amount of disquiet from his neighbours - they were worried about the future of ... Eliot School and the effect of the 'Bulge' and the new Estates upon the School. These discussions ultimately led to the meeting of parents... and the formation of the Protest Group.

"The Group had heard of the building of a further secondary school ... and they were concerned to know how two types of secondary education could be contained in the District - the Group members assuming that there would be a secondary grammar school and the comprehensive school."

The Group were proud of the local comprehensive and asked for an assurance that Eliot School would be extended, even if in temporary Huts for the time being:

"... the Group wanted a self-contained unit on the secondary side - and not two types of secondary education in the one District."

They were fairly happy about primary education but

"were worried about this problem on the secondary side. The Group felt that education had become a shuttlecock: they had rejected overtures from local political parties: education was most important nationally. The Members of the Group wanted to be of help and wanted to be put into the picture locally in order to allay their fears."²

There were too many rumours, too few facts known, about secondary education in the area.

The District Education Committee Chairman appreciated the Group's "sincere approach" and their offer of help. Secondary school accommodation in the area needed a permanent increase, and

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1. E/PB/10/15.11.56, p.184-5. Notes on Meeting with Parents' Protest Group held 31.10.56.
 2. The Chairman of the Group had been active in the trade union and labour movement all his adult life. The Group had local Conservatives in it, some of these being prominent in local politics. No Liberals took part. The Group was absolutely non-political. Source: letter to author from former Chairman of Group, 25.2.67.

"while increases of a minor character might be possible in the accommodation at Eliot School it would not be possible sufficiently to extend the school on the Eliot site ... to take all the secondary pupils anticipated in the future. The District Committee did not welcome the suggestion of providing temporary accommodation at Eliot School because of the difficulty of finding space for such accommodation without reducing the amenities of the school and perhaps destroying the playing fields."

At this stage, the local District Education Committee Chairman used to the parents one of the arguments put by the CEO two years previously to the District Education Committee when it suggested exactly what now the parents proposed: the extension of Eliot School.

The Parents were possibly preaching to the already converted, at least in so far as maintaining the local comprehensive school was concerned. The same District Education Committee meeting which received the above report also considered their Sub-Committee's recommendations on the Clerk's Report on Revision of the Development Plan¹. The estimated future school population now showed that secondary accommodation would be required for approximately 1,500 pupils, excluding those who stayed on after the age of sixteen. That meant 10 x 30 form-entry, and the question was how the Eliot and Blake buildings could be organised to provide for these needs. Various ideas were advanced by the Clerk, but the one which the Sub-Committee recommended and the District Education Committee approved was that Eliot should become the equivalent of an Upper, and Blake of a Lower School - i.e. that the two buildings would be used for one comprehensive school. This form of organisation was favoured for three reasons²:

"first... the proposal would best serve the needs of the local secondary school pupils, secondly, (it) would meet the wishes of the majority of the parents and, thirdly, ... Eliot School had been established as a secondary comprehensive school at the direction of the Education Authority, was developing very satisfactorily and .. nothing should be done to impair the future of the school as a secondary comprehensive school."

It was further agreed³ that authority be given to the Headmaster of Eliot

1. E/FB/10/15.11.56, pp.182 and 186.

2. Ibid., p.182/3.

3. Ibid., p.175.

School to inform the teaching staff, in confidence, of this decision. This was another example of teachers in this area being put in the picture at an early stage.

In general, the Committee seemed in a mood to make information available to interested people. The Parents' deputation had complained that too few facts were known, and the Committee had agreed it would be advantageous if more information were released publicly about its work. Experimentally the Clerk was to mark with a "P" those items on the agenda which might after the meeting be released to the press.

The desire to make information available immediately led to certain difficulties, probably as a result of muddled administration. The Barnet Press¹ reported the District Education Committee's proposal for Eliot and Blake Schools not as a result of receiving the information direct, but because reference was made to it at the second public meeting of the local Parents' Association (the re-named Parents' Protest Group). Thus what was to be conveyed to teachers "in confidence" rapidly became public knowledge. Evidently when the Clerk wrote about the Committee's plans to the Parents Association subsequent to their deputation, he did not do so "in confidence". In any case, the Secretary of the Eliot School Parent Teacher Association objected to hearing about the proposals through the press, and claimed the right to be kept informed direct and prior to publication. When this protest and a report about the second meeting of the Parents' Association were considered by the District Education Committee's Sub-Committee²,

"the opinion was expressed that details of the Committee's secondary education proposals should not have been released to the Parents' Association; that the Association, a non-accredited organisation, was making comments on school matters without checking the accuracy of their information, and that this Association appeared to be claiming as its objective responsibility not within its competence."

The Association's aims and objects were³

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1. 1.12.56. Headline: "Plan to Lessen Overcrowding at Eliot School. Blake may be 'Lower' School for Younger Children".
 2. E/PB/10/20.12.56, p.198.
 3. Ibid., Report of Development and General Purposes Sub-Committee, p.192.

"to ensure adequate accommodation in local schools, that adequate information was made available to parents on education matters and also to foster and further the work of local Parent Teacher Associations."

The District Education Committee decided that if further requests for information were received from the Parents' Association which was within the purview of Parent Teacher Associations at individual schools, the Association be directed to the appropriate Parent Teacher Association¹. Thus the Association would not be able to usurp the functions of individual Parent Teacher Associations.

Perhaps there was some tension between older established residents and newcomers moving to the estates built by the two Borough Councils. The old hands might have felt the newcomers were trying to show them how to run their affairs even before they knew the local situation. The NUT District Secretary, for many years a local resident, recollected² that the Chairman of the Parents' Association (originally called Parents' Protest Group) had come as a new resident to the area and had immediately thrown himself into public life. This man himself is of the opinion that

"the outlook for the newcomers was very different indeed from the old parents, who had very strongly (most of them) opposed a comprehensive school"³

Tension between old and new residents might explain the District Education Committee Chairman's irritation revealed at an Eliot School prize-giving. He had⁴

"Stressed that the Committee are adamant about the course adopted in dealing with ... education problems ... Outside intervention had gone on long enough, and he recalled there were protest groups when the school first started."

"Outside intervention" might here refer to the new residents, who possibly dominated the protesting parents' group. That the Parents' Association was concerned with the effect of building the new estates on school provision had been made clear when their Committee members met the

1. E/PB/10/20.12.56. Report of Development and General Purposes Sub-Committee, p.193.
2. Interview.
3. Letter from former Chairman of Parents' Association to author, 25.2.67.
4. Barnet Press, 3.11.56.

District Education Committee Chairman at the end of October. That they were critical of the handling of educational provision by the LEA was also made clear. One Committee member of the Parents' Association had a letter published¹, laying blame on the elected representatives for not making school provision for the influx of more children, leading to school overcrowding in the area. She invited all residents from the new estates to join the Parents' Association.

In the same issue, the Association's Chairman, in a letter, expressed the view that some 'clangers' had been dropped and that parents were entitled to know why. The Association was worried by the effect on primary school provision if Blake School became the Lower School of the Comprehensive, and was approaching the Ministry of Education for an independent inquiry into the Eliot School situation. The Association also proposed to ask the Middlesex Education Committee for the Surveyor's Report on Eliot School or to be given permission to have an independent survey made. It will be remembered that the Association's Committee wanted the extension of Eliot School, but that the District Education Committee representatives had argued that the site did not permit adequate permanent extensions. Clearly the Association remained unconvinced and intended to press the Eliot School extension. It is not altogether surprising that in face of this onslaught the County Education Committee Chairman had assertively replied that his Committee in consultation with the local Committee, were formulating plans for secondary school accommodation to meet the needs of new housing developments².

Another difficulty about publicity must have been the inconvenient fact that District Education Committee and County Education Committee were in disagreement. The proposals made at local level had to be argued persuasively and repeatedly at County Council level because they were at variance with County Council secondary schools policy. During 1957 the District Education Committee asked various interested parties to whom information was given not to make it public because of the discussions

1. Barnet Press, 8.12.56.

2. E/PB/10/17.1.57, p.213.

in progress with the County Council. Initially the County Schools Sub-Committee accepted the local proposal for the Eliot and Blake buildings to be used as one secondary comprehensive school only for the short-term, provided it was understood that¹

"as a long term measure the Education Committee was not satisfied that this form of organisation was the most satisfactory..."

The District Education Committee was asked to reconsider the whole matter - when it did so the local Committee simply re-asserted that in its opinion the²

"only satisfactory organisation of the Blake premises was to use these ... for the first and second year pupils of Eliot Secondary School."

The local proposal was accepted as a temporary measure by the County Council simply "to meet the urgent accommodation difficulties in the area"³. Having earlier used tactics of delay, the County Council now had to face the serious overcrowding in local schools. The CEO's Report to the Schools Sub-Committee posed the long term problem along these lines⁴: Should Eliot School be extended to take all the secondary pupils in the area, or should a new secondary school be established, and Eliot School limited to, at most, six form-entry. Both the two-school organisation and the large comprehensive school organisation presented difficulties. Two-school organisation could be achieved either by turning Blake School into a secondary modern or into a grammar school. If Blake School were established as a secondary modern school, the main problem would be allocation between Blake School and Eliot School. It would be aggravated by the closeness of the two buildings. If a catchment area were defined, the CEO thought local opposition would be strong

".. since parents, whose children had to go to Blake School would consider that their children were being denied the advantages of the education offered at Eliot School, which is a comprehensive school. There is already evidence of strong local opposition to this arrangement."

1. E/PS/10/17.1.57, p.216.

2. Ibid., p.211.

3. SchsSC/15/18.12.56, p.52.

4. Ibid., p.48.

If Blake became a grammar school, the buildings were the wrong size. On the assumption that ten form-entry was required by the local secondary school population, Blake School would have to be four form-entry size. That would mean 40% grammar school intake. The County average was 25%. There was the further difficulty that Zone 1, of which the area was a part, was already generously supplied with grammar school places - it was thus very doubtful whether an addition of four form-entry could be justified. Also, as grammar school places were pooled on a zonal basis, local children might take up only a small proportion of the places provided and that would mean the area's accommodation problem would not be solved. Finally, turning Blake into a grammar school would affect the grammar school stream at Eliot.

Turning to the other possibility, the local proposal of one large comprehensive school housed in two buildings could be adopted. The CEO's comments on this were that such a school would be very large, "considerably exceeding the size regarded by the Education Committee as a desirable maximum"; furthermore, if the secondary school population should turn out to exceed ten form-entry, it might at a later date be even more difficult to provide a second school.

Thus whichever way the matter was sliced, re-organisation had to be undertaken in particularly trying circumstances - aggravated by present overcrowding and the need for builders to work at Blake School to prepare it for occupation for secondary school purposes.

Meanwhile considerable local interest in the secondary school position was apparent. The Parents' Association continued its work of assessing school requirements. In May they claimed to have completed their assessment of accommodation needed and were concerned over prospects for the period of late 1957 and early 1958¹. In February the Chairman of the District Education Committee reported that the Ratepayers' Association had approached him for information². Later the Association

1. E/PB/11/13.6.57, p.40.

2. E/PB/10/21.2.57, p.229.

enquired whether they might print the information given them about proposals for primary and secondary education in the District. It was reported to the District Education Committee that¹

"In view of the discussions which were taking place at the present time the Association had been requested not to publicise the correspondence."

In April attention was drawn by the local Development and General Purposes Sub-Committee to an article in the local press which had complained about lack of information available to the Eliot Parent Teacher Association regarding proposals for the future development of secondary education. The Sub-Committee had agreed

"that the Head Master and the Clerk to the Committee should explain as far as practicable the present situation concerning the development proposals with the intention of removing any misunderstanding in the minds of members of the P.T.A. and of seeking to avoid publicity on this matter which was undesirable at the present time."

In June the Clerk reported that he had met members of the PTA Committee and had outlined the proposals for secondary re-organisation on which the decision of the LEA had not yet been received. He reiterated that²

"The Association were asked not to give publicity to this matter."

Members of the Parent Teacher Association wanted the District Education Committee to know that they

"were willing to support the Committee in any possible way in the proposals to expand the system of comprehensive secondary education in the District."

Such support was likely to be needed, since the Clerk also reported that the CEO had early in May written to convey that the County Schools Sub-Committee had approved outline proposals for additional accommodation at Eliot and Blake Schools but that building extensions could be considered only when the final organisation of the two schools was known. It was hoped the Schools Sub-Committee would reach a decision soon³. In fact, the Schools Sub-Committee appointed a special panel to review the Development Plan, and this Panel refused to endorse the proposal

1. E/PB/11/18.7.57.

2. E/PB/11/13.6.57, p.32.

3. Ibid., p.34.

concerning the organisation of the two schools and a single ten form-entry school. In August a Special Meeting of the District Education Committee¹ was held to consider this refusal - prior to a meeting between the local representatives and the County Panel. The local position was again reviewed,

"including the steps which led originally to the establishment of a comprehensive school in the District and the sound academic tradition and public esteem which had now been achieved by Eliot School."

After full discussion the District Committee reaffirmed their unanimous support for the continuance of the system of comprehensive secondary education in the area, and appointed five of their members to meet the County Council Panel members.

The joint meeting was held only to end in deadlock. And this at a time of admitted overcrowding in the local schools. Accounts of the joint meeting were given both to the local committee in note form² and to the Schools Sub-Committee in the CEO's Report³. The former made it abundantly clear that the Vice-Chairman of the County Education Committee (who was Chairman of the Special Panel dealing with Revision of the Development Plan) was pressing the County's policy which opposed large schools.

"... it was the present policy of the County Council not to provide secondary schools of more than 6 form-entry, and ... the Panel were not in favour of large schools."

Putting a personal view, he wondered whether two bilateral schools might meet the needs of the district - there were already too many grammar schools in the Zone. The

"Panel were thinking of two separately controlled schools of two separate types of education. ... by 'bi-lateral schools' he meant schools taking a grammar and a modern type of education."

Another County Panel member thought one secondary school might have emphasis on the academic side, the other on the technical side - Eliot School was well equipped on the technical side. She

1. E/PB/11/9.8.57, p.57.

2. Ibid., 17.10.57. Notes on discussion on 14.8.57. p.58.

3. SchsSC/17/17.12.57. CEO's Report, p.50.

"rebutted the charge that the Panel were wanting to change the form of education previously agreed; she felt the situation had changed and that they now wanted to find the best solution for this changed situation."

The Labour Minority Party County representative, Cr. Mrs. Beech, supported the area's proposal for one form of secondary education in one school. And the local spokesmen themselves again argued the special case of the area which was isolated from the rest of the County and where a comprehensive school was already in existence. Moreover, that school had been erected on the insistence of the County. Originally there had been

"opposition not only from local parents but from members of the District Committee: the Committee had accepted the decision of the County Council and they had done their utmost to develop Eliot as a comprehensive school and to make a success of it. The County Council were now causing distress to the District because of their hesitation in deciding the way in which secondary education should be expanded and because of the suggestion that the system of comprehensive education .. should perhaps be destroyed. Eliot had not yet had the chance fully to develop but it was progressing very satisfactorily."

Thus spoke the local Committee Chairman. Another member added that

"the District had become educated to the system of comprehensive education and it was asking a great deal to re-educate parents into another line of thought."

Yet another indicated that local members were

"not dogmatic about there being only one Head Teacher ... (they) would be prepared to examine ... appointment of a separate Head Master for the Lower School."

The CEO's Report gave much the same picture, clearly conveying that the Panel had wanted to discuss what type of school the second secondary school should be which the area needed. The local representatives had come to see their comprehensive school

"as a system which suited [the area] admirably. They had a good staff and a good school and they wished it to continue. The present uncertainty was causing great distress in the area. The whole district had been educated to the idea of comprehensive education... the only reasonable solution appeared to be the enlargement of the comprehensive school. Any alternative form of secondary education would inevitably destroy comprehensive organisation."

The CEO added

"The Panel pointed out in this connection, that [the area] exports a large proportion of its grammar school pupils."

Subsequent to the meeting between County Panel and local representatives, the Chairman of the Panel had visited Eliot School for further discussions. The Panel remained of the opinion (with the exception of the Minority Party representative) that the area should have two secondary schools, and that either Blake School should become a secondary modern with a strong technical bias, Eliot School remaining as a comprehensive; or Blake School should become a Grammar/Technical School, Eliot School to become a modern school. The County Schools Sub-Committee (with the exception of the four Labour Councillors) agreed there should be two schools and favoured the proposal that Eliot School remain as a six form-entry comprehensive, Blake School to become a secondary modern with strong technical bias. Since the local representatives had not agreed to the idea of two schools, the Panel was to have a further discussion!¹

It is of interest that the Schools Sub-Committee reached this inconclusive decision only in December 1957, five months after the joint meeting of County Panel and local representatives; three months after the further visit of Panel Chairman to Eliot School for further talks; one week after the District Education Committee had commented on the fact that the County Education Authority had not yet made a decision and had instructed the Clerk to ask for an urgent consideration of the local proposals because of the need to go ahead with the extension and adaptation of the two secondary school buildings. Evidently the County Council continued their tactics of delay, and the local Committee pressed their case once again to the County's attention.

Prior to the further round of talks, the District Committee decided to adhere to its previous decision². Early in February the local representatives restated to the County representatives their case against the Schools Sub-Committee proposal and in favour of their own. They were informed that the Schools Sub-Committee would consider the matter further³.

1. SchsSC/17/17.12.57, p.54.

2. E/PB/11/16.1.58, p.98.

3. Ibid., 20.2.58. Report of Meeting held 4.2.58, p.108.

This time, at County level, the CEO again reported fully on the background - his Report to the Schools Sub-Committee was almost identical to the previous one - but he concluded that when the Sub-Committee had met in December 1957¹,

"it was agreed that it was educationally undesirable that [the area] should be served by a single secondary school of such dimensions."

Nevertheless, the local representatives had adhered to their recommendation for one school and were satisfied that ten form-entry would meet local needs up to 1965 on expected housing and population developments.

At this stage the unbending Schools Sub-Committee gave in to the unbending District Education Committee and agreed to recommend the County Council to accept, subject to Ministry of Education approval, the amendment of the Development Plan proposals for the area, and to authorise the issue of the necessary notices².

In March, the County Council accepted this recommendation. Thus shortly before the County Council elections at which the Conservatives lost their majority, the District Education Committee won its case which otherwise the Labour-controlled County Council would have accepted without delay. Indeed, at County Council level, the Labour Councillors had backed the case of local Conservatives. Naturally the local people were jubilant. At the April meeting of the District Education Committee, the Chairman reviewed³

"the steps which had been taken over the past three years to obtain the concurrence of the County Education Committee to the recommendation of the District Committee that one secondary comprehensive school should meet the growing requirements of the District."

He listed three reasons for success:

"public esteem which had been gained by Eliot School";

"unanimous support .. given by members of the District Committee to the expansion of the School.";

1. SchsSC/17/18.2.58, p.92.

2. Ibid., p.95.

3. E/PB/11/10.4.58, p.126.

"tolerance .. shewn over a lengthy period by local organisations which were directly or indirectly interested in the development of educational facilities in [the area]."

Yet there remained access in response to parents' wishes to grammar schools in neighbouring areas of Middlesex for children who were deemed to be suitable for a grammar course of education. The Committee would do all in their power to meet parental preference in this respect, but had

"been pleased to note that an increased number of parents of children of grammar school ability were selecting Eliot as their first choice of school."¹

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1. Figures were given to later meetings of the District Education Committee (E/PB/11/17.7.58, p.157 and 15.1.59, p.222) which showed that whereas in 1953 only three local parents out of the 52 with children aged eleven who were considered suitable for a grammar school course expressed a preference for the local comprehensive school, in 1958, 23 parents out of 84 gave Eliot as their first or second preference - a rise from under 6 to over 27 per cent. However, even then it meant that a total of somewhere between 250-300 children of secondary school age resident in the area were attending grammar schools in neighbouring areas of Middlesex.

(d) Conclusion on Case Studies

The implementation of schemes for comprehensive schools in two parts of the County has been considered in this chapter. Certain common features were observed in the two areas studied. Both local committees had accepted the County's comprehensive policy in 1946 and had submitted proposals for secondary schools organised on comprehensive lines for inclusion in the County's Development Plan. Many local councillors and teachers at the time had only the haziest notion about comprehensive schools, and the issue had not yet become politically controversial.

Grammar school teachers through the Joint Four had voiced criticism of the Council's policy during 1947. But once comprehensive schemes for particular schools were proposed by the Education Committee, political opposition was also encountered at County Council and at local level. In the 1948 Urban District Council elections, Conservative gains were made in both areas. This affected the composition of the District Education Committee and the Divisional Executive responsible for the schools which were to become comprehensive. These Conservative gains contributed in the one case to the replacement in 1949 of the local Conservative District Education Committee Chairman who had supported the establishment of the comprehensive school; in the other it contributed to withdrawal of Divisional Executive support for the comprehensive scheme in response to parental and teacher opposition in the area.

Although open opposition to the comprehensive school proposals occurred earlier and was fiercer in the area where an existing grammar school was threatened, and came from teachers as well as parents, open opposition from parents arose in the second area also as soon as access to grammar schools was at stake.

In all these ways the two areas had common features. But they differed in other important respects. Reorganisation was very much simpler in the area where there was no grammar school; where the only secondary modern would through reorganisation into a comprehensive be raised in status; where only one Head Teacher's post was involved;

where the staff were in sympathy with the proposal. Reorganisation was altogether more complex where an existing grammar school was to be amalgamated with an as yet uncompleted secondary modern school the other side of a railway line and half a mile away in distance; where the posts of five existing Head Teachers were involved and reorganisation allowed for the appointment of only two; where the grammar school staff were opposed to and other staff apprehensive about the proposed changes.

Three general conclusions can be drawn from the two studies of attempts to reorganise existing schools into comprehensives in the early post-war years. The first concerns the attitudes of teachers and parents to reorganisation; the second the role of the Labour councillors who initiated reorganisation; the third the officers in their role as advisers to the councillors.

Both areas illustrate the importance of teacher and parental support for successful school reorganisation. It was on account of teacher and parental opposition that the scheme involving Keats Grammar School lost the backing of the local Divisional Executive and in the end had to be dropped. Early teacher and parental support for Blake School as a comprehensive, on the other hand, enabled that school to weather the later storm over compulsory attendance, a protest which some local parents and some members of the District Education Committee would have turned into anti-comprehensive channels had local conditions permitted it. Later local support among parents for the comprehensive school (by then at the new Eliot premises) was so strong that the Conservative District Education Committee successfully insisted on the School's extension against the express wishes of the Conservative County Council.

For South West Middlesex two comprehensive schemes were proposed, only one of which involved the existing Keats Grammar School. Given that the comprehensive school idea was new and that the grammar school was accorded a high status in the eyes of parents and teachers, protests against the scheme involving the grammar school were to be expected. The extent of these protests took inexperienced councillors and officers by surprise.

But these protests should not overshadow the uneasiness among teachers in South West Middlesex at the Byron Secondary Modern School. The fears of teachers at Byron School were not the result of agitation by Joint Four members, as was the case at Keats Grammar School. Byron School was a Secondary Modern organised in two Departments and its staff were organised in the NUT. Although the proposal for Byron School was dropped by the LEA because the buildings were considered unsuitable after further examination, the unfavourable reactions of the staff should not be lost sight of.

An interesting point arises: why was there no staff trouble at Blake Secondary Modern School, whereas at Byron Secondary Modern School there were resignations or threatened resignations from the staff? It is true that only one Headmaster was involved in the reorganisation of Blake School, whereas a Headmaster and a Headmistress were involved at Byron School. But with adequate consultation, this problem could surely have been overcome¹.

The striking difference between the proposed schemes for the Blake and Byron Schools was that satisfactory consultation occurred in the one case but not in the other. The evidence suggests that this was due more to the role of the Headmaster at Blake School than to better handling by councillors or officers of the staff concerned. After all, as far as councillors and officers were concerned, all the proposed comprehensive schemes were put forward in a rush, although it is true that acceptance by the District Education Committee of the scheme for Blake School was secured three weeks earlier than endorsement by the Divisional Executive of the scheme for Byron School. But given the situation in South West Middlesex an extra three weeks would have made no difference.

The Headmaster of Blake School was a committed man as far as the comprehensive school was concerned. He was active on its behalf in the

1. The former Chairman of the Education Committee (Cr. Mrs. Beech) stated that at another Secondary Modern School organised in two Departments, which became a comprehensive in 1948, the Headmistress of the Girls' Department had indicated her willingness to become Deputy Head of the reorganised school.

Middlesex County Teachers' Association. He had in the summer of 1947 invited the Labour Chairman of the Education Committee to Open Day at his School to explain to parents what the comprehensive school offered and how under a comprehensive system the eleven plus could be abolished. Parents had applauded the idea. This was long before the County Education Committee was even thinking about particular schools. With such a positive attitude to comprehensive organisation, this Headmaster will have been a propagandist among teachers and parents in his District. It was most probably on his suggestion, rather than on the initiative of councillors or officers, that meetings of parents were called at the two contributory primary schools in the spring of 1948, as soon as the scheme for Blake School had been put forward. When at one of these meetings some parents expressed doubts about the scheme, within a month an NUT speaker addressed the doubting Thomases in order to win them over. This second follow-up meeting had been arranged on the suggestion of the Headmaster of Blake School.

By contrast, there was no Headmaster in South West Middlesex who sponsored the comprehensive school idea. The Headmaster of the only Grammar School was certainly against it. In the summer of 1947 the NUT branch in South West Middlesex had organised a meeting on the comprehensive school, but the platform there was not 'committed'. An ex-NUT President had spoken in favour of the idea, a leading Grammar School Headmaster against¹.

The following year, at the first informative meeting for parents, the leaflet distributed by the Teachers' Advisory Panel also put both sides of the question. By the time that meeting was called, feelings among teachers against the schemes were already running high. The local teacher who was Secretary of both the NUT branch and the Teachers' Advisory Panel also sat on the Divisional Executive. Within the Middlesex County Teachers' Association he voiced the resentment of teachers in his area at the complete lack of consultation over the comprehensive school proposals. He may not have opposed reorganisation on comprehensive lines

1. See Chapter 4, pp.106-107.

in general, but he certainly did criticise the particular proposals made for his area, and especially the rush and lack of consultation.

Thus the Headmaster of Blake School and other teachers in that District took matters in their own hands and propagated the comprehensive school idea which the County Council had proposed and their District Education Committee had endorsed. In this way they took the initiatives which one would have expected from an LEA determined to introduce changes in school organisation. In South West Middlesex the same LEA had proposed comprehensive schemes, and these had also been endorsed by the Divisional Executive. But here no teachers were willing or able to shoulder the public relations work which it was the responsibility of the LEA to undertake. The NUT Divisional Secretary did his best to step into the breach, but all he could do was to lower the temperature of feverish resentment among his own members.

The second conclusion concerns the role of the councillors. When Labour's comprehensive school policy was originally adopted by the Middlesex Education Committee in 1946, no Conservative opposition had been voiced. But Labour councillors were not content to leave matters in the realm of general policy. They wanted to start at least a few comprehensive schools to show what they could do before the next County Council elections came along in 1949. But they left themselves too little time to persuade those most immediately concerned to accept the changes proposed in 1948. It is one thing to propose a general policy and get it accepted. It is quite another to implement policy in particular cases. It is often only then that those involved start raising their reservations and difficulties. These then require sympathetic discussion. The teachers' fears about their professional security would probably not have reached the pitch they did had the LEA given the required assurances earlier.

The hurried introduction of comprehensive school proposals made it difficult to allay genuine fears. This difficulty was aggravated by the fact that criticism of or reservations about particular proposals became confused with general opposition to the County Council's comprehensive school policy. Labour councillors claimed they were carrying

out the policy of the County Council which had earlier been settled. Thus when in 1948 comprehensive school proposals were put forward, Labour councillors resented the Conservative opposition which then began to be voiced. As the majority party they were assertive of their constitutional rights. Above all, they were convinced that policy decisions were the preserve of the elected representatives, and that it was wrong for teachers to oppose the LCA's policy once this had been settled.

As far as the NUT was concerned, Labour councillors had expected positive support instead of apprehension from teachers towards their proposals. On this count the Chairman of the Education Committee was over-optimistic, at least as far as South West Middlesex was concerned. It is possible that her husband's role contributed to this, since he was one of the NUT stalwarts on behalf of the comprehensive school in the County and may in his enthusiasm have underestimated the degree to which teachers in some parts of the County still had reservations about this new idea. But Labour councillors were especially incensed by the organised anti-comprehensive activities of grammar school teachers in the Joint Four. Their anger in this respect may also have contributed to inadequate thought being given to non-grammar school teachers in the NUT. Teachers were, after all, employees of the County Council, held the Labour councillors. As such they were bound to carry out its policy. However tenable this view of the teachers' position was, public reference to a Grammar School Headmaster as a "servant" of the County Council did not reduce tension nor secure for the County Education Chairman an attentive hearing at the particular parents' meeting at which the Headmaster concerned had uttered his anti-comprehensive views.

So strong was the conviction among Labour councillors that the policy-making prerogative was theirs, that they must have regarded it as a blow below the belt when the Minister advised that schools selected for the comprehensive experiment should be in areas where parents and teachers were favourably disposed towards the change. This in effect gave parents and teachers a veto over County Council policy. Only in this light can the attempt of Labour councillors to withhold the Minister's unpalatable conditions from the Education Committee be understood. When

the grammar school scheme was dropped, it was argued as a face-saving device that some of the buildings were not ready. There was some truth in this, but at the same time no reference was made to the overwhelming opposition of teachers and parents, and Labour councillors reserved the right to put forward later further comprehensive schemes for the area.

Responsibility for failure in public relations did not rest with councillors alone. Councillors, after all, act on the advice of their officers. This leads to the third general conclusion about the role of the officers. The six individual schools which were to become the first comprehensives in Middlesex had been selected on officer advice. The H.M.I. had been particularly helpful and had been favourably disposed towards Labour's policy. The County officers, by all accounts, were not personally in favour of comprehensive schools, had advised against the speedy reorganisation in 1948, but had nevertheless loyally supported their Committee's policy, and at parents' meetings advanced arguments in favour of the experiment.

The officers were probably as inexperienced in reorganisation of schools as were the councillors. There were many new tasks facing officers after the 1944 Education Act. This might in part explain why officers did not advise in favour of earlier and more extensive consultation with teachers and parents. It was bound to upset the Head Teachers at Byron School to receive their first news about proposed changes at their School informally from the NUT Divisional Secretary instead of officially from the LEA. Similarly it must have been most annoying to staff to gather from press advertisements that their own schools might be subject to radical changes.

But there is another explanation for the very inadequate consultation of staff. Officers had a misguided concept of secrecy where policy decisions were concerned. Councillors accepted, probably on the CEO's advice, that staff should not be informed until the Minister had approved particular schemes. It was held that secrecy should be maintained until the policy was settled. This explains repeated exclusion of the press from crucial meetings and the general impression which was created of a highly secretive political operation. In the circumstances it would

have been wiser to take at least the staff into the Authority's confidence at a much earlier stage, even if it was held that the general public, including parents, had to wait for information until plans had come nearer to fruition.

PART III

THE FEE-PAYING GRAMMAR SCHOOLS:

DIRECT GRANT AND INDEPENDENT DAY SCHOOLS

Chapter 7The Schools' Dependence on the StateIntroductory

An LEA is empowered under the 1944 and 1953 Education Acts to use schools not maintained by itself or another LEA. The position of direct grant and independent day schools used by Middlesex County Council Education Committee for a proportion of its secondary school pupils will be considered in this section. The County Council also had schemes for taking up places each year at a number of well-known boarding schools¹, but here attention will be restricted to the fee-paying day schools, or to those where the vast majority of children attended as day pupils.

The relationship between these schools and the LEA is in part determined by national legislation and by the regulations, circulars and administrative memoranda issued by the Department of Education and Science (DES - formerly the Ministry of Education), which set the framework within which LEAs and school governors negotiate². Nevertheless, the precise character of the relationship is bound to vary from area to area, since each board of governors of these schools and each LEA enjoys considerable freedom in decision-making. At times this

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1. These schemes were broadly in line with the proposals of the Fleming Report of 1944, which made proposals for bringing the public schools into closer association with the state system. Middlesex County Council had schemes with five boarding schools. In one case pupils for whom Middlesex was responsible (in all cases of boarding school pupils, parents contributed to the cost on an income scale) made up more than one quarter of the total pupil role.
 2. The statutory position and relevant regulations, circulars, etc. were fully dealt with in Part I, Chapter 2(d).

discretion is the greater since the legal requirements are of necessity general and can be interpreted to meet the particular needs or views of school and local authority respectively.

Detailed study of the non-maintained fee-paying secondary grammar schools is worthwhile because their existence and use by the LEA - even if only for a small minority of its pupils - is held to have exerted an influence on the maintained schools catering for the majority of children. The evidence in this Part of the thesis shows how broad issues of secondary schools policy in the maintained sector were affected by the non-maintained schools' existence and their use by the Authority. This evidence is presented in three chapters: the first illustrates the varying degrees to which the fee-paying day schools depended on the state, the second the extent to which Middlesex County Council depended on fee-paying day schools, whilst the third forms a case-study of one fee-paying school and its relations with Middlesex County Council.

The schools with which the Middlesex Education Committee had an arrangement for placing pupils remained substantially the same between 1945 - 1965. There were six direct grant grammar schools - three within the County and three outside, but close to its border. Some twenty independent day schools received pupils through the County Council scheme; half the schools were Roman Catholic. This section, therefore, relates to approximately twenty-six schools (the number fluctuated a little over the years), but of these the really important ones were the six direct grant schools and some nine independent schools (three of them outside the County, but easily accessible from certain parts of it). These fifteen schools had (in 1961) over 91 per cent of all pupils placed in such schools by the County, and received 90 per cent of the annual County's expenditure on fees for its pupils in such schools¹.

The extent to which these fifteen schools depended on the state (mainly via the DES and/or the LEAs) may usefully be examined from four angles: current income from public funds; proportion of total budget met from public funds; raising funds for capital expenditure; and degree of dependency and school status.

1. File 4: Annual Estimates 1961.

(a) Current Income from Public Funds

The largest single source of current income from public funds for the direct grant schools is the grant from the Department of Education and Science. This takes the form of a per capita and a sixth form grant for pupils in the upper school¹. No equivalent grants are made to independent schools. Thus fees at direct grant schools are subsidised whereas those at independent schools are not. In addition, parents whose children are at direct grant schools at their own expense may claim remission of fees on an income scale; the DES makes a remitted fees grant to the schools in question where remission is granted. DES grant and fees together have to cover most of the current expenditure of fee-paying schools. In addition schools have varying, usually very small, amounts of income from endowments or other private sources.

Income from fees by non-maintained day schools is drawn partly, or - in the case of the direct grant schools - largely from public funds. The statutory provisions² governing payment of fees by an LEA are different for direct grant from independent schools. In the case of the direct grant schools, the approved fees for pupils in the upper school are paid by LEAs, the DES, parents whose children are accepted as fee-payers and, in a small proportion of cases, by school governors or from endowment funds. In order to be eligible for free places at direct grant schools, Middlesex children had to be attending a maintained primary school at the time of transfer to the secondary school, which was a stricter requirement than under national regulations. Under these a child was eligible if at any time it had attended a grant-aided primary school for at least two years.

1. See Part I, Chapter 2, p.70, for details.

2. These were fully explained in Part I, Chapter 2 (d), pp.62-73.

Direct grant schools situated in Middlesex had arrangements with the Education Committee of the County Council for putting at the disposal of the LEA the total quota of free and reserved places. Thus these three schools obtained half their fee income from the County Council. The direct grant schools used by Middlesex across the County border depended slightly less heavily on Middlesex County Council for their fee income; the proportion of County financed pupils entering (in 1961)¹ was between 25 - 45 per cent in these three schools. Doubtless they also had arrangements with the LCC, thus receiving a higher proportion of fees from LEAs than these figures suggest.

As far as the independent day schools were concerned, Middlesex took both free and assisted places. Until the Manual of Guidance² necessitated a reconsideration of the County's policy, all County financed pupils had the whole of their fees paid by the LEA from April 1945, when fees were abolished in maintained secondary schools. In 1952, the distinction between free and assisted places was introduced. In the early 1960s, when the number of places taken by the Authority in all fee-paying schools was cut, there was also a shift in the proportion taken in the independent day schools from free to assisted places. A closer examination of this policy decision taken in 1963 and dealt with later, will illustrate the importance the independent schools attached to the free and assisted places for recruitment of their pupils. Pressure was exerted by the schools and especially by the Roman Catholic independent schools, to try and mitigate the severity of proposed cuts in numbers of places which were considered by the Schools Sub-Committee of the County Council's Education Committee between 1961-63.

How dependent on the LEA were the nine independent schools mentioned earlier, which between them took the vast majority of the County sponsored children going to such schools? In 1961 the proportion of children in these schools who were wholly or partly financed by Middlesex

1. File 4: Annual Estimates 1961.

2. Choice of Schools, Manual of Guidance, Schools No.1. 23.3.50. HMSO.

County Council ranged from 10 to 29 per cent¹. As some of the children held assisted places, the proportion of fee income derived from the LEA will have been a little lower. It was estimated that an assisted place cost the County Council on average approximately 75 per cent of the total fee².

It is evident, then, that direct grant schools receive a much higher proportion of their fee income from public sources than do the independent day schools. The regulations³ governing pupil admission and their interpretation by Ministry and LEAs result in a much higher proportion of LEA financed pupils making up the school rolls of direct grant schools than of independent ones. In 1961 half the fee income of the three direct grant schools situated in Middlesex was derived from the Middlesex County Council, and the three schools close to the County border drew from 25 - 45 per cent of their fee income from this source. The nine independent schools with large Middlesex contingents of pupils probably received between 10 and 30 per cent of their upper school fee income from the County Council.

Parents, in the main, paid the remaining fees of pupils⁴, except in so far as LEAs other than Middlesex placed pupils in these fee-paying

1. File 4: Annual Estimates 1961. These figures are more difficult to interpret than those given for direct grant schools because the total pupil roll (taken from List 70, 1963) includes children in the preparatory department. Two of the 9 schools had pupils from 11-18 years (the normal age range in maintained secondary schools). The per cent of LEA financed children in these two was 15 and 29 per cent respectively. The other seven schools had age ranges of from 4-18 years (1); 5-18 (1); 7-18 (4); and 8-18 (1). In the latter cases, the per cent of pupils financed by the County in the Upper School will be somewhat higher than the per cent figures in the text suggest.
2. File 3/20.
3. See Part I, Chapter 2, pp. 71-72.
4. Except in so far as fees for privately placed pupils are financed out of tax refunds under educational covenants or other similar arrangements. Titmuss refers to the longest ever waiting lists of private schools resulting from the "variety and liberality of provisions for the offspring of the wealthier classes...". See Richard M. Titmuss, Income Distribution and Social Change, Allen & Unwin, 1962, p.80.

schools. This was of importance for the three direct grant schools close to the Middlesex border, and probably also for three of the nine independent schools which were situated in the LCC area.

Figures published nationally concerning the direct grant schools confirm in general what has here been stated about the six schools with which Middlesex County Council had arrangements for taking places. In 1947, the total number of pupils in the upper schools of direct grant grammar schools, was 62,566¹. Of these, 56 per cent had free or reserved places and paid no fees; 16 per cent had residuary places and paid partial fees; the remaining 28 per cent of residuary place holders paid full fees. By contrast, in the lower schools 98 per cent paid full fees. More recently, in 1963, the total number of pupils in upper schools was 95,929². Of those 62.3 per cent had free or reserved places - LEAs paid the fees of 60.6 per cent, Governors of 1.7 per cent; of the residuary place holders, the fees of 6.8 per cent were wholly remitted, 10.3 per cent paid partial fees and 26.6 per cent paid full fees.

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1. Education in 1947, Cmd. 7426, June 1948, Table 20.
 2. The Direct Grant School. A Memo. by the Direct Grant Committee of the Headmasters' Conference (quoting Ministry of Education, Statistics of Education), page 27.

(b) Proportion of School Budget met from Public Funds

Information about school accounts is publicly available for direct grant schools as a whole, but for individual schools it is much more difficult to obtain precise details, irrespective of whether the school is a direct grant or an independent one. The accounts of Schools B, I and J were in fact examined at the Educational Charities Register but those for other fee-paying schools used by Middlesex were at the time said not to be available¹.

From Statistics of Education² one can gather that in 1962/3 the total income of the direct grant schools (upper schools only) was £13,405,000, made up as follows (in '000s):

<u>From Public Sources</u>		<u>% of total income</u>	
Fees from LEAs	£4,159		
Grants " "	£ 88	£ 4,247	LEA: 31.7
Remitted Fees Grant	£ 427		
Capitation and Sixth Form Grant	£5,487	£ 5,914	DES: 44.1
Total Public		£10,161	Public 75.8
<u>From Parents & Other Sources</u>			
Fees from Parents	£2,411	£ 2,411	Parents: 18.4
Fees from Others	£ 19		
Transfers from foundation reserve funds net	£ 111		
Sale of books	£ 14		
Fees for extra subjects	£ 108		
Receipts for school meals	£ 581	£ 833	Other: 5.8
		£13,405	100 %
		<u>=====</u>	<u>=====</u>

1. It is not clear whether the Charities Act 1960 entitles members of the public access to the accounts of individual schools. It certainly does allow access to the accounts of trusts. There is room for further research on this matter.
2. 1963, Part I, Table 34. Totals and per cent figures have been calculated from figures given in this table.

The 1963/4 accounts of Schools I and J, both direct grant schools used by Middlesex County Council for LEA-sponsored pupils, showed a very similar percentage distribution in their sources of income. The table below compares the 1963/4 position of these two schools with the overall national figures for 1962/3 as given on the previous page.

Table
Income of Direct Grant Schools¹
% from different sources

	All Dt. Grant Upper Schools 1962/3	School I 1963/4	School J 1963/4
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<u>From Public Sources</u>			
Fees from LEAs	31.7	30.3	37.8
Remitted Fees Grant, Capitation & Sixth Form Grant from DES	44.1	38.6	39.2
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Total Public	75.8	68.9	77.0
<u>From Parents & Other Sources</u>			
Fees from Parents	18.4	22.9	14.9
Other	5.8	8.2	8.1
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	100 %	100 %	100 %
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Thus it can be concluded with assurance that individual direct grant schools depend on public funds to cover between 70 and 75 per cent of their current expenditure.

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1. Sources: All direct grant schools: Statistics of Education, 1963, Part I, Table 54.
Schools I and J: Register of Educational Charities, Accounts of these two schools for 1963/4.

It is much more difficult to say anything conclusive about the degree of dependency on public funds of the independent day schools. The fees in these schools, certainly in the better known ones, are higher than those in direct grant schools. There is no subsidy through direct grant. In the early 1960s, annual tuition fees in direct grant schools were under £100, in some of the independent schools used by Middlesex County Council they were also around this figure, but in others they were anything between £100 and £160 approximately.

Between 10 and 30 per cent of the children in these schools were financed by the County, but it would not be safe to conclude from this that 10 to 30 per cent of the schools' total current income came from this source¹. After all, fees might have been lower than they would otherwise have to be because the school had endowments.

As far as School B was concerned, this independent school received in 1960/61 just over 30 per cent of its fee income for the upper school from Middlesex County Council, and just under 70 per cent from parents for pupils placed privately. In the case of this school there was certainly no question of endowment income permitting lower fees. The net income of the Foundation from sources other than fees was equivalent to no more than 12% of the total amount received from fees, and this was put to reserve for future capital expenditure. In the year in question there was, in fact, a surplus on the school's current account, which was used towards paying for certain items of capital expenditure. Thus the level of fees was such that parents and the County Council contributed towards the school's capital expenditure². School B was the only independent school for which figures could be obtained.

1. Statistics of Education, 1963, Part I, Table 29, shows that LEAs paid a total of £8,151,000 for fees for secondary school pupils at direct grant and independent schools in 1962/3. As £4.1 million of this can be identified from the separate figures published for direct grant school fees, it can be concluded that LEAs paid £4 million for fees to independent schools. Not that we are much wiser from this information, and even these inadequate figures have been published only since 1959/60.
2. Register of Educational Charities, Accounts for School B for 1960/61. It was possible to apportion fee income between MCC and Parents because the proportion of pupils in the upper school who were LEA-sponsored was known from Middlesex records.

Without much more information about individual schools, on both the income and expenditure side, all that can be concluded is that some dependency on public funds exists in the case of independent day schools. In fact, a document dealing with selection for secondary education after the new Outer London Boroughs took over the education service pointed out with reference to the independent schools that¹

"over the years the organisation of the schools has been geared to receive a quota of pupils from the County and a sudden change of policy would make for serious difficulties within the schools..."

1. File 1. The Outer London Boroughs took over full responsibility for the running of the education service in April 1965.

(c) Raising Funds for Capital Expenditure

The Department of Education and Science makes no grant to schools for capital expenditure. Independent and direct grant schools are wholly responsible for the maintenance of their buildings and for any new capital expenditure. Section 9(1) of the 1944 Act, however, empowers LEAs to make grants to schools not maintained by them¹.

Little is so far publicly known about the financing of school building in the non-maintained sector. Perhaps it is not widely known that it is in fact possible to find out in very great detail how individual schools finance improvements of old or construction of entirely new school buildings. All capital expenditure by schools registered under the Charities Act 1960 has to be authorised by an Order, under Sections 25 and 29 of that Act, made by the Secretary of ^{State for} Education and Science. These Orders may be examined at the Register of Educational Charities. They show what building projects have been authorised, the total cost thereof, and the method by which finance is to be raised².

When financing their own capital construction, direct grant and independent schools adopt, in the main, two methods. One is to sell realisable assets - financial securities or land and real property - the proceeds of which are used to pay for new school buildings; the other is to take up loans³. In addition, small surpluses from current income may be available for financing certain capital projects.

But although all fee-paying schools are responsible for their own capital expenditure, assistance has in fact been given from public sources in a variety of ways, particularly to direct grant schools.

1. See Part I, Chapter 2, p.63.

2. Details about the capital expenditure of individual schools which follow have partly been drawn from this source. For certain schools file sources were available in addition at the Middlesex Record Office.

3. For details of the capital expenditure of certain schools connected with Middlesex, see Appendix at the end of this Chapter, which has been included because of the lack of knowledge on this subject.

Assistance by way of capital grants appears to have been greater before than since the second world war, at least in Middlesex. When LEAs make capital grants towards building costs, these are made to the school governors, and the improved or new buildings remain the property of the governors.

Middlesex County Council made no capital grants to direct grant schools after the war. But some LEAs must have done so, because the Statistics of Education for 1963¹, for example, showed that grants of £88,000 were made by LEAs to direct grant schools. The published figures do not indicate whether these were maintenance or capital grants. Total capital expenditure and loan charges for that year amounted to £521,000. Thus at the most some 17 per cent of the direct grant schools' capital expenditure was in 1962/3 met from public funds, taking all the direct grant schools together. This was a small proportion compared with the pre-war capital grants given by Middlesex, which in two cases amounted to over fifty per cent.

In the 1930s, Middlesex County Council made capital grants to three direct grant schools under Section 70 of the 1921 Education Act. It was the Authority's policy to make capital grants to certain secondary schools from time to time which were

"... not receiving maintenance grants from the (Education) Committee. These have been given for such objects as the extension of the school buildings and the purchase of school playing fields and on terms which, whilst safeguarding the interests of the County Council, should in no wise hamper the development of the schools on individual lines."²

Two direct grant schools (Schools B and C) were given very substantial assistance in acquiring land and erecting entirely new buildings. They moved into the outer fringes of the County from the inner urban areas of London at a time when population was moving outwards. Without these grants, financed out of local authority rates, these two schools could not have made the move, unless funds had been forthcoming from

1. Part I, Table 34.

2. MEC File: Educational Development: Notes for Speeches. The quoted extract is from Notes prepared in 1931.

some other source. Their own endowments were quite inadequate to finance the building of a new school.

When School C established itself in Middlesex in the late 1930s, agreements were negotiated under which the County Council paid 66 per cent (£46,000) of the cost of new buildings for 600 pupils, a similar proportion of the cost having already been borne by the County Council when the necessary land had been purchased by the school in the late 1920s. This school has remained a direct grant school. It was otherwise with School B, which received 53 per cent (£30,563) of the cost of land and new buildings and equipment for 450 pupils from the County Council when it moved to Middlesex, also in the late 1930s. In addition, £19,000 was lent by the County Council to the school, until the old school buildings in inner London could be sold. Later the LCC bought these for approximately £20,000. Thus the school was either granted or lent a sufficient sum of public money to cover almost 88 per cent of the cost of moving from old to new premises.

Yet School B decided in 1945, when the Direct Grant List was revised, not to apply for inclusion on the new List, but to become independent. The Order of the Board of Education under which the original capital grant had been made included a clause for the repayment of this grant, and after the war lengthy negotiations ensued about this repayment. A detailed account of the decisions concerning the capital grant to this school and its repayment is included later, since it throws light both on the decision-making process and on the assumptions made by those involved in it¹.

A third direct grant school, School E, not situated in Middlesex, but in the LCC area just across the County border, and with 80 per cent of its pupils drawn from Middlesex in the 1930s, applied to the County Council for capital grants towards the building of science laboratories, a swimming pool, a gymnasium and an assembly hall for the junior school. In 1931, this school had received a capital grant of nearly £12,000

1. See Chapter 9.

to cover the cost of a new science block. But the negotiations for further capital grants were discontinued after the outbreak of the war¹.

In 1961 School E moved from London to Hertfordshire. No capital grant was made to this school by an LEA at this time. But public funds nevertheless became available to help finance the new school. The LCC paid \$244,000 for the old school buildings (now used by the Inner London Education Authority for a secondary school). This sum covered over half the total cost of £459,000 for the new buildings in Hertfordshire for 1,000 pupils. The balance was borrowed by the governors or came from 'various' sources. At least the science block of the old school buildings sold to the LCC had been paid for by Middlesex County Council, but as was pointed out earlier, when capital grants are made by LEAs, the particular school governors retain possession of the buildings. These can then be sold at the current market price if the school decides at a later date to move and the proceeds used to build new, better premises. It seems that old premises are usually sold to a local authority, which often continues to use them as a school. Thus it is the maintained sector which is left with the older buildings at a time when private schools move to better buildings. The three direct grant schools B, C and E all sold their old buildings to the LCC. Two of the three received substantial public capital grants, apart from having at their disposal the purchase money for old buildings. Under the Charities Act, the Secretary of State is obliged to protect the interests of registered charities, so local authorities purchasing old buildings are bound to pay what is at the time considered to be a reasonable market price.

No evidence was found of capital grants by the Middlesex County Council to independent schools. One is inclined to conclude that an independent school is wholly responsible for financing its own building projects. But even independent schools receive some financial help from public funds by virtue of the tax advantages accorded to registered charities. All the more important independent schools are registered

1. For detailed information about Schools B, C and E, files at the Middlesex Record Office were consulted in addition to the Board of Education Orders at the Register of Educational Charities.

charities, and as such enjoy tax exemption on investment income, and on covenanted donations from industry, old boys and girls, parents and other benefactors. It is of interest that the Industrial Fund for the Advancement of Scientific Education in Schools raised between 1957-63 a total of nearly £3¼ million from industry, approximately one third of which, over £1 million, was tax recovered on covenants. This Fund made grants to independent and direct grant schools. Fourteen schools connected with the Middlesex County Council were given grants towards the cost of building and equipping science teaching rooms¹.

The evidence shows that the extent to which individual fee-paying schools have depended on public funds for financing their capital expenditure has varied greatly between schools and over time for the same school. It also shows that direct grant schools depended more heavily on public funds for financing capital expenditure than did independent ones, particularly in the 1930s. Chapter 9 will make it clear that Middlesex County Council would not have considered making a capital grant to an independent school. Yet School B was able to take up independent status after the war, having been direct grant before the war, and as such having had very substantial assistance in financing its capital expenditure. Its post-war capital expenditure was financed without public assistance.

Clearly, then, a school's status is not fixed for all time, but changes over the years. When one investigates the status of schools, one finds that the old foundations are represented in all categories. Some have become maintained schools: county, controlled or voluntary aided; others have become direct grant; yet others remain independent. Indeed, there has been considerable mobility between these different degrees of dependence on or independence of the state (LEA and/or DES). The observer might think a school's status is almost a matter of chance. Evidence in the next section shows that the possession of financial resources or their lack has had a determining influence on the status of particular schools.

1. Industrial Fund for the Advancement of Scientific Education in Schools, Final Report, December 1963, Appendix A, B and C.

(d) Degree of Dependence and School Status

Even within the maintained school sector, the rights of foundation school governors in the running of the school are greater in a voluntary aided than a voluntary controlled school because in the former case a proportion of any capital expenditure falls on the foundation, not on public funds.

The evidence shows that the degree of independence which old foundation schools have retained, or regained, has been a direct consequence of their ability or inability to shoulder capital expenditure. When they have been unable to do so, they have turned hopefully, and often successfully, to sources of public funds. Acceptance of such funds, however, involved acceptance of a degree of public control. Direct grant status, for example, involves compliance with the Secretary of State's regulations to which independent schools are not subject. Such control is, however, reversible in the event of the school becoming more affluent. And public assistance at one period may well contribute to making the school more affluent at a later date.

Apart from School B in Middlesex, which changed from direct grant to independent status after the war, two schools with large contingents of Middlesex pupils in the LCC area also changed their status after the 1944 Act, thereby acquiring more independence. School F became direct grant, having been grant-aided before the war, and having in 1950 received a capital grant of over £5,000 from the LCC. This school, as is shown in ^{an} Appendix following this section, has since been able to undertake extensive rebuilding without receiving any public grants. School G changed from direct grant to independent; it had not depended at any time on public capital grants for building.

The story of School A, a grammar school for boys in Middlesex, is worth relating at some length. Although the school is today part of the maintained sector as a voluntary aided school, its history shows beyond doubt that independence was surrendered when the governors became financially unable to meet their current and capital obligations from

endowment and fee income. Had their financial resources permitted, the governors would undoubtedly have preferred at least the degree of independence afforded by direct grant status. But the foundation's resources never recovered sufficiently for that. After the war, however, the governors were able to achieve voluntary aided status simply because of their improved financial situation. That status regained for them at least some small part of the independence which in earlier years they had had. The relevant sequence of events is conveniently given by the school's own Senior History Master, in a book published in the 1950s. The account which follows is taken from this source¹, unless otherwise indicated.

Like many other old foundations, School A faced financial difficulties at the turn of the century. In 1901, its endowments produced income of only £600 per annum, and by 1907, of a total school expenditure of £2,400, the Board of Education and the Middlesex County Council between them had to find £500. By 1909, the sum so received stood at over £1,000.

At this time about half the boys entering the School came from elementary schools, the other half had attended private schools or been educated at home. Approximately half of those recruited from elementary schools had their fees paid by the County Council or by local District Councils, mostly by the former. The County Council awarded a few free places also to boys whose previous education had been privately financed. In 1908, out of a total of 17 free County Council places, six went to privately educated boys. In that same year 62 boys entered the school. Thus at this early date, possibly up to 25% of the pupils were Local Authority financed. In addition the County Council and the Board of Education between them were meeting rising annual deficits on current account.

Under the 1902 Education Act, secondary education was expanding and in this area of Middlesex, the County Council had the choice between

1. The source is not quoted here as School A would then be identified.

two courses of action to extend provision. One was to make terms with the governors of School A to extend their school, the second, to build its own school. Had the County Council chosen the latter, this would have adversely affected pupil numbers in School A at a time when greater income was imperative. Constantly rising subsidies from the Board of Education and the Middlesex County Council could not go on indefinitely. Thus it was vital for the school's future that the County Council should choose the first course of action, although the terms of help to the school under any agreement would be very important.

In 1906 negotiations commenced with the Board of Education on the basis that the County Council and the Governors would share the cost of building extensions. These were concluded in 1908, when it was decided to build at over £5,000, the County Council and the Governors sharing the expenses.

The Governors were unable to meet the maintenance costs of the extended buildings, and thus in 1910 a new Scheme replaced the old one of 1896. Under the old Scheme the government and maintenance of the school was the responsibility of the governors, acting under the general authority of the Charity Commissioners.

The 1910 Scheme confirmed and strengthened the influence of the County Council and its financial responsibility was correspondingly increased. The school's site and buildings remained the property of the governors, but the County Council became trustee of the endowment, its powers being controlled by a new Deed of Trust. As trustee, the County Council administered the school's funds and was responsible for the educational efficiency of the school. All current expenses for maintenance, equipment, salaries, book supply, etc. were now met by the County Council. The seventeen governors all became "representative". These representative governors exercised such powers as were delegated to them by the Middlesex Education Committee. They had the right to make recommendations and to be consulted before the County Council or the Education Committee took decisive action, a right they asserted vigorously and successfully against the Council on more than one occasion.

At the cost of independence, some part of the endowment income was now available, but the use to which it was put was clearly defined. £150 per annum was set aside for maintenance allowances for needy boys and for exhibitions to boys going on to higher education. Any additional surplus was to accumulate to a special fund, invested at compound interest, reserved solely to meet the cost of making additions to or improvements of the school buildings or purchasing land.

It was presumably these accumulated funds which enabled the governors in 1919 to buy for £1,850 five acres of freehold land at a time when the County Council purchased for use by the school a large house and grounds, adjoining the school for £1,500. Thus additional space was acquired for the school which by the 1930s accommodated over 500 boys instead of 200 in 1907.

The governors' capital assets were also improved from two other sources: approximately in 1916 fifty acres of farm land were acquired, on a site where the school's Old Boys held a further eight acres, in compensation for loss of the rectorial tithes at the general enclosure. Then, in 1939, a hotel was sold for £6,000, which sum was added to investments. This hotel had been part of the foundation's property from which endowment income had been drawn.

Part of the farm site was in turn converted into other investments: about seven acres were sold to the Middlesex County Council for building a maintained secondary modern school, and eighteen acres were sold for £7,000, although the governors tried to get over twice as much for it¹.

Negotiations with the Board of Education in the 1930s resulted in Schools A and B being newly built on adjacent sites. The Board of Education was apparently concerned about the original proposals for financing the building of the new School A. Apparently the foundation was to contribute only the amount standing to the credit of its building fund in 1935; the remainder of the estimated cost of £51,000 was to be raised by the LEA². The Board of Education thought the Foundation should

1. See Chapter 9, page 433/4.

2. Files: School B. Letter from Clerk to MCC to Secretary of MEC, dated 5.11.35.

make a larger contribution, as the school governors would acquire completely new buildings. Because of these reservations on the part of the Board of Education, the County Council's Finance Committee proposed that the proceeds of sale of the existing grammar school buildings should be applied towards the cost of the new school, and should not be added to foundation funds. These premises had been valued at £10,754 (including certain property belonging to the County Council) and the County Valuation Officer was to be asked to apportion this sum between the governors of School A and the County Council. Such an arrangement would in the opinion of the County Council still have left the governors of School A with the sums received for sale of part of the farm site, from which a considerable income could be obtained. The Finance Committee also proposed that a $3\frac{1}{2}\%$ loan be made to the governors until the old school site and buildings could be sold¹.

The governors (all of whom were at this time nominated by the County Council) protested to the Board of Education against the suggestion that their foundation should contribute more to the cost of the new buildings than had been originally proposed. They asked that a deputation be received by the Board of Education. The Secretary of the Education Committee as Clerk to the school governors was in the peculiar position of having to write this letter just after the County Council's Finance Committee had put forward the above suggestions for financing the new school².

Evidently a compromise was made, since School A's History Master states that it was agreed that the foundation should contribute to the erection of the new school the farm site and half the estimated eventual selling price of the old land and buildings, in so far as these were owned by the governors. This estimated sum was to be lent to the school governors by the County Council at low interest until the property was realised. At the time when the School History was written, the old lands and buildings were still owned by the governors and let to the

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1. Files: School B. Letter from Clerk to MCC to Secretary of MEC, dated 5.11.35.
 2. Files: School B. Letter from Clerk to Governors to Board of Education, dated 6.12.35.

County Council for educational purposes; rent received was part of their endowment income, interest on the loan from the County Council was expenditure. The passing of the 1944 Act caused a revival of the question of ultimate settlement but an agreement regarding the old property was made between the governors and the Middlesex County Council only in 1958¹. The new school was occupied in 1939, and was erected mainly at the cost of the County Council, whilst remaining the legal property of the governors.

After the war, following protracted negotiations, voluntary aided status was granted in 1952 and the Instrument and Articles of Government were completed in 1955. This status could be achieved because the governors had the necessary resources at their command to accept responsibility for annual expenditure on maintenance of their property and general administration. Voluntary aided status gave the governors certain powers not held by governors of a fully maintained school. The chief privilege in this respect concerns the nomination of the governing body. The County Council and the Borough together now nominated only one third of the eighteen governors. Since 1910 the County Council had nominated all seventeen.

This account by School A's own historian shows that the degree of financial dependence of School A on the County Council and Ministry was very great indeed. All current expenditure and much of the school's capital expenditure had been met from public funds, which enabled the governors over the years to accumulate some reserves, on the strength of which voluntary aided status was then achieved. Thus public assistance over many years facilitated the accumulation of reserves sufficient to enable the school governors regain some measure of independence. One may surmise that if the reserves had permitted it, the school governors would gladly have applied for direct grant status.

In this chapter as much evidence as was obtainable has been given about the dependency of non-maintained schools on the state to cover their

1. Register of Educational Charities, File for School A.

current and capital expenditure. In the main dependency was here explained in financial terms. It was shown that the dependency of the direct grant schools was far greater than of independent ones. But financial dependency was not the whole story. Both the direct grant schools and independent day schools as selective schools undoubtedly valued the LEA-sponsored pupils because these they selected from among the most able youngsters in the maintained primary schools. This 'creaming' process was perhaps one of the causes for ambivalent relations between the private and state sector of education. The maintained grammar schools resented losing this talent, yet all too often they emulated the private schools and with them formed a common front to preserve selective schools, both state and private.

This takes our study naturally to the next stage: how dependent was the LEA on the fee-paying schools?

(e) Appendix: Financing of Private School BuildingNotes

1. Little is so far publicly known about the financing of school building in the non-maintained sector. For this reason this appendix has been included.
 2. Grants for capital expenditure made by local authorities to private schools are underlined in the tables which follow, as are sales of land and old school buildings by the private sector to the state sector.
 3. The information given in this appendix was drawn mainly from the Register of Educational Charities at the Department of Education and Science. It is not always complete, and some school files were not available at the particular time when the Register was visited.
 4. Information drawn from records at the Middlesex Record Office is marked with a single asterisk (Thus *).
 5. Information drawn from the published Histories on particular schools is marked with two asterisks (Thus **).
 6. Where information has been drawn from sources other than the above, a footnote indicates source.
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Table

Financing of Private School Buildings

<u>Year or Date of Order</u>	<u>Land/Buildings/Improvements</u>	<u>Financial Transaction</u>
<u>SCHOOL A</u>		
25.2.1910.	Enlarging/improving buildings of school	Authorised Amount: £4,921, of which Grant from MCC £2,477, remainder from proceeds of sale of property and of consols.
21.10.1919.	Acquisition 5 acres land adjoining school premises	Authorised Amount: £1,850, of which £1,739 from proceeds sale National War Bonds and 5% War Stock; balance from Foundation income.
Approx.1916.	**Compensation for loss rectorial tithes at general enclosure, Foundation received 50 acres farm land.	
5.5.1931.	<u>6.15 acres of farm land to be sold to MCC as LEA.</u>	Authorised Price: £1,250. Proceeds to be invested.
12.7.1935.	<u>1.12 acres of farm land to be sold to MCC as LEA.</u>	Authorised Price: £2,000.
6.8.1936.	18 acres of farm land to be sold to School B.	Authorised Price: £7,000.
Approx.1936.	*Building of new school on farm land site.	*Cost £51,000: of which **Foundation to contribute site and half eventual selling price of old school and land. Balance to be met by MCC.
12.7.60.	1.75 acres of farm land to be sold to School B.	Authorised Price: £10,000.
18.8.61. Varied 27.7.62 and 6.2.63.	Freehold interest in old school and land to be sold which was subject to 21 years Lease from 1.1.51 at annual rent of £800.	Authorised Price: £19,000, of which £3,500 to be paid as compensation to MCC, as head Lessee of property, for termination of tenancy. Balance to be invested.
5.3.63.	Alteration/improvements to school	Authorised Amount: £1,867. To be raised through sale of £3000/3% War Stock. Stock to value of £1,867 required to be replaced within 30 years out of Foundation's income.
<u>SCHOOL B</u>		
22.9.1899) 25.9.1900)	Sale of land/buildings of old school.	Authorised Price: £31,000, of which £27,000 to be invested in New Consols. Balance to acquire certain freeholds.
7.10.1890.	Building Gymnasium for School	Authorised Amount: £1,500. To be raised through sale Consolidated Stock. To be repaid over 10 years at £135 per annum.
10.6.1907.	Enlarging/improving School buildings	Authorised Amount: £9,563. To be raised by sale of Consols. To be repaid over 16 years.
19.7.1907.	Purchase land adjacent to School	Authorised Amount: £2,500. To be raised through sale of Consols.
29.5.23.	Improvement of School buildings	Authorised Amount: £2,886. To be financed from Foundation's accumulated income.
5.8.36.	<u>Sale of land/buildings of old School (*to LCC)</u>	Authorised Price: £20,950, to be held in trust subject to further order.
26.1.37.	Purchase of land, erection new School buildings	Authorised Amount: *£26,713. Foundation to contribute £26,150 (proceeds above sale, plus accumulated income). <u>Middlesex County Council to finance balance of *£50,563.</u>
13.5.52.	Repayment Order subsequent to School B becoming independent	<u>Repayment of Grant to MCC in 46 annual instalments of £1,260, commencing 1.2.53, representing principal and interest.</u>
14.5.43.	Purchase leasehold premises for Junior School	Authorised Price: £2,320. To be raised by sale of Bank of England stock, and replaced by Government Stock over 27 years.
19.7.49.	Extension of School kitchen and purchase of residence for Headmistress	Authorised Amount: £1,000 and £4,100 respectively. To be raised by sale of Funding Stock. Replacement of value of buildings (not land) over 30 years.

(continued)

Table (continued)

<u>Year or Date of Order</u>	<u>Land/Buildings/Improvements</u>	<u>Financial Provisions</u>
<u>SCHOOL B (cont.)</u>		
24.11.55.	Extension of Junior School Conversion boilers at Senior School	Authorized Amounts: £10,000 and £4,000 respectively. To be financed from proceeds of sale of property in London.
1957 (1)	Additional science laboratories	Amount not known, but part of cost paid by Industrial Fund for Advancement of Scientific Education in Schools (4)
1960 (2)	$\frac{1}{2}$ acres of land to extend school site (1.75 acres of this sold to School B by School A, see order dated 12.7.60 under School A)	Authorized Amount: £22,625. To be financed from proceeds of sale of property in London and £2,575 from general surplus of revenue.
1961 (1)	Extension of one wing of School	Estimated cost £10,000 (3)
<p>Notes: (1) Information about these two additions was secured from the Girls School Year Book 1966.</p> <p>(2) Industrial Fund for Advancement of Scientific Education in Schools, Final Report, 1963, showed that School B had received a building grant.</p> <p>(3) Information from 1960-61 School Accounts seen in Register of Educational Grants.</p>		
<u>SCHOOL C</u>		
1928*	*10-15 acres and a mansion for playing fields and school annexe.	*Purchase Price: £17,500. 1928 MCC authorized assistance up to two thirds, including cost of adaptation of buildings. Actual grant paid £16,480.
1936*	*Purchase 5 further acres of land same site.	*Purchase Price: £5,000. MCC contributed two thirds: £3,333.
1937-1940*	*Building new School	*Actual building costs £70,000. MCC contributed £46,000. Foundation contributed balance, but had during war to raise loan of about £25,000 for this.
4.7.57.	<u>Sale of old school buildings in London to MCC</u>	Authorized Price: £30,000. If this 47% went to School C, the balance to another school which remained in London when School C moved to Middlesex.
1957 (1)	Science facilities.	Grant given by Industrial Fund for Advancement of Scientific Education in Schools.
?? (2)	Swimming Pool at School	Financed by Parents of a Pupil who died.
<p>Notes: (1) Industrial Fund for Advancement of Scientific Education in Schools, Final Report, 1963, showed that School C had received a building grant.</p> <p>(2) Information secured personally from a parent with daughters at School C. This parent added that all parents are asked to sign covenants for the School Building Fund.</p>		
<u>SCHOOL D**</u>		
1927	Playing fields purchased	£16,000.
1927	Full scale inspection of school revealed that keeping old buildings in good repair was very costly. Recommendation made that school should move out from London.	£31,000.
1928	Board of Education and MEC consulted by School so that choice of neighbourhood for new school could be made, avoiding area already well served. Secretary, MEC, stated "would warmly welcome a decision to move the School to ... the County".	
1929	Contract signed for land in Middlesex. 250 acres.	
1930-32	Old playing fields sold. A hospital in London considering buying School's old buildings for use as a medical school.	Sale of fields and old buildings helped in financing the building of new school in 1941.
1933	School moved to new buildings accommodating 500 pupils.	
1946-53	School extended to accommodate 600 pupils	
1957	Grant from Industrial Fund for Advancement of Scientific Education in Schools to improve science facilities. Several form rooms converted into extra laboratories and equipped for advanced work.	School's Founding Company contributed balance of funds.
1961	New premises for art school.	Quatercentenary gift from Founding Company.

Table (continued)

<u>Year or Date of Order</u>	<u>Land/Buildings/Improvements</u>	<u>Financial Transaction</u>
<u>SCHOOL E</u>		
25.3.1915.	Purchase of site for building school.	Authorised Amount: +£6,884. To be raised by sale of Consols.
25.3.1915.	Erection of buildings, and their expansion.	Authorised Amount: +£31,586 and £8,425 respectively. £32,000 to be raised on a mortgage under an Order of 21.6.1898. Balance from income of Foundation. (*Expenditure incurred between November 1897 and December 1912).
6.8.31.	New building to be erected and equipped as science block.	Authorised Amount: £11,881. Financed by Grant from LCC.
27.1.54.	Purchase of property for Preparatory School and adapting property.	Authorised Amount: £13,200 and £15,277 respectively. To be raised from sale of property in London and of National War Bonds. Replacement representing value of buildings (£26,927) over 30 years.
31.3.54.	Improvements to School E (and to School H)	Authorised Amount: £11,286. To be raised by sale of War Stock and £288 from income of Foundation. To be replaced in 5 years.
27.6.55.	Erection of two cottages at school playing fields.	Authorised Amount: £5,300. To be raised by sale of Bonds, Premium on Lease of London property, etc. Replacement over 30 years.
12.1.59.	<u>Sale of land and old school buildings and playing fields to LCC.</u>	Authorised Price: £225,000.
2.3.60.	Sale of land and buildings of preparatory school.	Authorised Price: £19,000.
2.7.63.	Provision of new School and staff accommodation in Hertfordshire.	Authorised Amount: £459,042. To be financed as follows: £244,000 proceeds above two sales; £152,550 authorised loans; £ 7,878 sale of Stock; £ 54,574 other sources. Loans to be discharged over 25 years. stock capital replacement over 30 years.
7.7.66.	Cricket pavilion at new School	Authorised Amount: £6,000. To be raised by borrowing on security of mortgage. Repayment over 12 years.
<u>SCHOOL F</u>		
20.2.1930.	Alterations/additions to premises of Upper School	Authorised Amount: £5,114. Financed by grant from LCC.
17.12.37.	Improvement/enlargement premises Lower School.	Authorised Amount: £4,159. To be financed by sale of Stock, to be replaced over 40 years (extended to 60 years on 16.3.1960.)
27.3.50.	Building new kitchen and dining room.	Authorised Amount: £7,515. To be financed by proceeds from sale of real estate. Replacement over 20 years.
19.4.51.	Purchase land/premises for use of Upper School	Authorised Amount: £19,825. May be borrowed at 3%. Loan to be discharged over 30 years.
12.7.55.	New Gymnasium for Upper School Overhauling/renewing heating system and electrical system.	Authorised Amount: £19,084. To be financed from proceeds of sale of real estate £5,000; Loan £14,000; income of Foundation £84. Replacement: Stock of value £5,000 within 30 years. Loan to be discharged 30 years.
20.2.57.	Improvement of premises: New biology lab, physics lab, reorganisation history/geography and visual aids, reorganisation of chemistry/physics. Accommodation block for masters. Playing fields and tennis courts.	Authorised Amount: £45,087. To be financed as follows: £25,000 loan at 7%; £ 9,000 grant from Industrial Fund for Adv. of Scientific Education in Schools; £ 4,000 proceeds sale real estate; £ 1,275 balance sum from LCC; £ 5,812 income of Foundation.
2.7.56.	Purchase houses for use of School.	Authorised Amount: £6,225. To be raised out of £7,500 received from LCC under grant agreement dated 9.6.36.

(continued)

Table (continued)

<u>Year or Date of Order</u>	<u>Land/Buildings/Improvements</u>	<u>Financial Transaction</u>
<u>SCHOOL F (cont.)</u>		
14.5.64.	Purchase houses for use of School.	Authorised Amount: £17,700. To be financed out of part proceeds of authorised sale for which £90,000 obtained.
14.4.65.	Erection of boathouse and ancillary accommodation, including two flats.	Authorised Amount: £71,690.
<p>Note dated 19.5.1966: As a result of investing sale proceeds of £300,000, the Foundation has an income in excess of properties before they were sold. Governors intend investing surplus income for future use to defray capital expenses of rebuilding. We agreed they could do so "without recoupment in due course".</p>		
<u>SCHOOL G</u>		
3.1.1907 and 9.11.1908.	Erection, equipment of new School premises	Authorised Amount: £50,000. To be financed from loan on security of property of Foundation, including the site of new school. Repayment within 30 years.
11.5.1909.	Discharging liabilities in connection with building of new School and effecting mortgage	Authorised Amount: £1,960. To be financed by loan from Bankers, to be discharged within 10 years.
1.7.21.	Repairs and improvements to preparatory department.	Authorised Amount: £1,623. To be financed from proceeds sale of Bonds £1,000 and out of Foundation income £623.
12.2.26.	Part purchase money House for preparatory department.	Authorised Amount: £4,030. Financed by loan on security of mortgage on same premises. Repayment over 15 years.
5.4.27.	Rebuilding Junior School	Authorised Amount: £19,562. To be financed by loan on security of mortgage same premises and main school site and buildings. Repayment (together with £28,437 outstanding of loan authorised 9.11.08) to be paid out of income within 24 years.
19.1.40.	Meeting liabilities, including administration of Foundation	Authorised Amount: £40,000. Financed by loan on security of mortgage or charge on Foundation estate. Repayment over 30 years - 1st instalment may be postponed to 31.12.46.
23.11.55.	Meeting liabilities in administration	Authorised Amount: £8,383. Financed by loan on same security. Repayment over 30 years.
<u>SCHOOL H</u>		
25.3.1915.	Purchase site for building School.	Authorised Amount: +£2,824. To be financed from part sale of land, under Order 2.8.1898.
25.3.1915.	Provision of buildings and their extension	Authorised Amount: +£24,607 and £12,795 respectively to be financed from Premium on Lease of London property £9,494; Sale of Consols £14,000; Balance from income of Foundation. (+Expenditure incurred between November 1897 and December 1912).
29.1.26.	Purchase 6 acres for school site	Authorised Amount: £6,500
31.3.54.	Improvements to School H (and to School E)	Authorised Amount: £11,288. To be raised by sale of War Stock and £288 from income of Foundation. To be replaced in 5 years.
27.11.58.	Purchase of property for School	Authorised Amount: £4,000. To be financed by sale of Stock, to be replaced (value of buildings only, £3,226) over 30 years.

Table continuedSCHOOLS I & J

These two Schools are run by a Trust which is responsible for over 20 Schools. The Trust finances capital construction and improvements, and the accounts of each School bear a certain proportion of the capital charges. Loans are raised from time to time to finance improvements and extensions in all the Schools of the Trust.

Date of
OrderConsolidation of Loans and Repayment

- 5.4.57. Total authorised loans to date amount to £373,176, of which £191,277 has been repaid. Balance outstanding is £182,898. In addition, Trust borrowed £75,000 under a Court Order of 8.5.50, of which £67,101 is still outstanding.
Outstanding Loans may be consolidated - Authorised Amount: £250,000. Loan to be discharged out of Income of Trust over 20 years.
- 14.5.59. For Repaying £230,000 still outstanding and for financing extensions to schools.
Loan Authorised for £600,000. Mortgage Redeemable Debenture Stock to be redeemed out of income over 30 years.
- 20.9.62. Improvements/Extensions to Schools. £540,000 of £600,000 still outstanding.
Loan Authorised for £210,000. Mortgage Redeemable Debenture Stock ("New Stock"). Total aggregate principal sum not to exceed £750,000. Holders of old stock may exchange for new, and subscribe in cash at par to new stock. Remaining old, and new, Stock to be redeemed out of income of Trust over 30 years in yearly instalments of £25,000.
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Chapter 8The LEA's Dependence on the Fee-Paying SchoolsIntroductory

Under the 1944 Education Act, an LEA has the duty to secure that there shall be sufficient schools - both primary and secondary - in their area. The schools available are not deemed to be sufficient

"unless they are sufficient in number, character, and equipment to afford for all pupils opportunities for education offering such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of their different ages, abilities, and aptitudes, and of different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school, including practical instruction and training appropriate to their respective needs."¹

No word here about the fee-paying schools. It might well be argued that an LEA with sufficient schools of its own for the children in its area has no need to use places in fee-paying schools, and that in such a case no dependency would exist. Nor would Section 76 of the 1944 Act, that children be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents, necessitate the use of fee-paying schools by the LEA if its own schools offered the statutorily required "variety of instruction and training", since parental choice is limited by the duty of an LEA to avoid "unreasonable public expenditure" - and places in fee-paying

1. Education Act, 1944, Section 8(1)(b).

schools are generally dearer than in the LEA's own schools.

Why, then, were places in fee-paying schools utilised by the Middlesex Education Committee after the war?

It must be remembered that before 1945 fees were charged by all secondary schools (the grammar schools), irrespective of whether they were Local Authority or privately run. Middlesex County Council had a scheme for free and later for special places. These were offered in its own, in aided and in selected non-aided (i.e. direct grant or independent) secondary grammar schools. A special place meant that parents were relieved of fees, in part or whole, on an income scale. If their child was at a private school through the County Council scheme, then a parent who was liable for "full" fees under the income scale, paid no more than the fees charged at County schools, even though those at the private school were higher. The County Council reimbursed the school concerned with the difference between the County Council's and the school's level of fees.

Thus a certain relationship of dependency existed between the County Council and non-County schools (direct grant and some independent ones) before the war, and this relationship could not easily or quickly be changed, even supposing the Council had wished to change it. In this connection what was stated in the last chapter about School B and School C is important. These two direct grant schools had been newly built partly with County Council capital grants in the 1930s, in areas where new secondary schools were needed. Had these schools not come to their new homes in Middlesex, the County Council would have had to initiate school building of its own. The fact that some of the needed secondary school places pre-war were provided by direct grant (or independent) schools, made for a degree of LEA dependency on these schools post-war, at least for a time, as far as grammar school places were concerned.

Opinion in Middlesex among councillors and officers was generally in favour of placing a high proportion of its secondary school pupils over the age of eleven in grammar schools. The Education Committee found itself with a shortage of school places in its own schools,

especially in some areas of the County, where school building had not, and could not in the early post-war years, keep pace with population growth. So long as a shortage of grammar school places in the maintained sector prevailed¹, the placing of the ablest County pupils in the 'external' grammar schools - i.e. the non-maintained ones or out-County schools - was not challenged, and seems to have been taken for granted as a desirable course of action.

Thus it was that the County Council depended on the fee-paying schools for educating a proportion of the County's 'grammar' children after the war.

At no time between 1945 - 1965 was it proposed that the County Council should cease taking places in the fee-paying schools². The first Development Plan, looking to the future, possibly came nearest to it.

"The direct grant and independent schools have in the past played an extremely important part in helping the County to meet the deficiency with regard to grammar school places. In the initial stages of the Development Plan it is not proposed to disturb these arrangements, although when an adequate system of comprehensive schools is established it may be necessary to revise the arrangements with these schools."³

But two attempts were made (in 1950-51 and in 1961-63) to reduce the County Council's dependency on these schools by cutting the number of places annually taken in them. By the 1960s the County's building activities had resulted in an increase in the number of places in maintained grammar schools as new schools were completed, thus undermining the earlier justification of shortage of places for paying fees to non-maintained schools. Furthermore, 1958 was the peak year for eleven plus transfers into the secondary schools. Thereafter the number of pupils entering secondary schools annually fell. These circumstances

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1. Shortage according to criteria dealt with in Chapter 5, see especially pp.158/9.
 2. Except in the 1960s by an individual Education Officer, see page 370.
 3. Development Plan, 1948, Introduction, p.viii. (Author's italics).

combined to aggravate the jealousy of the maintained grammar schools at losing the top layer of talent to the fee-paying schools. Both the teaching staff of maintained grammar schools and the officers in the County's education service were concerned at the fall in the standard of the pupils taken into their schools. There was also the consideration of the expense of taking fee-paying places at a time when vacancies in maintained grammar schools existed. It was from these quarters that the initiative came to cut - but not to eliminate - the number of places taken by the LEA.

This chapter will outline the policy decisions of the Education Committee and the County Council concerning the use of direct grant and independent schools. A case study of one such policy decision will be included. It will also show how many pupils attended these schools under County Council arrangements, and the proportion of this number to grammar school transfers and to total transfers into secondary schools. Since the cost to the County Council of fee-paying places was higher than places in its own schools, some information on the financial side is included as well.

(a) General Policy about the Use of the Schools

Clearly the Education Committee intended to send some of its pupils to fee-paying schools under the new Education Act, as it had done before. This was illustrated by an unsuccessful attempt to alter the County Council's policy by the Labour Minority Group Leader, who in 1945 became a Labour M.P. One of the issues which had stirred Parliamentary controversy during the debates on the Education Bill, was the abolition or retention of fees in the direct grant schools. The Labour Group Leader tabled this motion on tuition fees in grant-aided schools for the County Council meeting on 26.10.44.¹

- "(a) That it is the considered opinion of this Council that the Ministry of Education in giving effect to the Fleming Report should, in the interests of equal educational opportunity for all children, recognise for grant purposes only those public and similar schools which agree to the total abolition of tuition fees and are prepared to admit scholars from amongst those who, by impartial selection, are deemed suitable irrespective of class or income."
- "(b) That this Education Authority will recognise in future only such schools as comply with the foregoing conditions."

The motion was referred to the Education Committee on 12.3.45, which rejected it, taking the view that if the motion were adopted, it

"might result in the Council finding its pupils deprived of opportunities of education at public schools otherwise open to them."²

Shortly afterwards, on 17.5.45, the Committee's attention was drawn to Ministry of Education Circular 32, which set out the conditions under which applications from schools for inclusion in the revised Direct Grant Schools List would be considered. The new rules about free, reserved and residuary places were explained. The Education Committee agreed to empower the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to negotiate with the Governors of the direct grant schools for the maximum quota of free and

1. MCC Repts/1944/Agenda for CC meeting on 26.10.44. Item 10.

2. MCC Repts/1945/Education Committee Report to County Council meeting of 22.3.45, p.27.

reserved places for Middlesex pupils¹. Such places in fee-paying schools would help to alleviate the shortage of grammar school places in the County's own schools. The agreements were concluded and throughout the post-war years until 1964 the Middlesex direct grant schools received at least half their annual intake under the County Council's scheme.

Influenced by the fact that fees in maintained secondary schools had been abolished on 1.4.45, the County reached yet another decision: to meet from that date the full cost of Middlesex-sponsored pupils in fee-paying schools. Thus parents who had opted to send their children to direct grant or independent schools and whose children had not yet completed their courses, would not be penalised by the choice made at a time when fees were charged in all secondary schools.

Thus even before the laborious work of preparing the County Council's Development Plan had got under way, the County Council had settled on the use annually of places in fee-paying schools and on meeting the full cost of the fees. The policy statement adopted in 1946, on the "Organisation of Secondary Education"², and later included as an Appendix in the first draft Development Plan in 1948, accepted that continued use would be made of these schools. The question of

"How far such schools can be made to fit into a unified scheme will depend rather on national than on local policy."

Indeed,

"At first a system of comprehensive secondary schools will probably create an increased demand for places at these 'external' grammar schools."

As soon as political control of the Council changed in 1949 from Labour to Conservative, the Education Committee began to prepare a revised second draft Development Plan. However, the arrangements which the County Council had with the fee-paying schools remained the same, though reference was made to the fact that some modification might be

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1. MCC Repts/1945/Education Committee Report to the County Council meeting of 31.5.45, p.62.
 2. Reprinted as Appendix III in Dev.Plan 1948, paras.(4) & (6), pp. 123 and 125.

necessary in view of the Ministry of Education's policy as outlined in the Manual of Guidance No.1.¹

These modifications hinted at in the revised Development Plan were under discussion in the Schools Sub-Committee in December 1950 and again in November 1951. The direct grant schools were not much affected by this review, since both the Ministry and the Local Authority regarded them as making up part of the Local Authority's provision under the arrangements to take up the free and reserved places. But the position of the independent schools was different. In 1952 the Education Committee first made the distinction between 'free' and 'assisted' places taken up at independent schools, as required by the Ministry of Education's Manual of Guidance No.1. Free places at independent schools were to be offered only where provision of grammar places (including accessible out-County places in maintained schools together with direct grant school ones) was inadequate. The discussions in the Sub-Committee were, therefore, concerned with establishing whether an inadequacy existed. How could this be judged? Should every child who passed the eleven plus examination be assured of a grammar school place? Even leaving aside that this only begs the question of what is a pass, by this criterion there was an abundance of grammar school places in at least some parts of the County. Getting a grammar school place was less a matter of passing, or nearly passing, the County Test, but more one of the availability of places and where in the County the child resided. In some areas of Middlesex the number of available places far exceeded the number of pupils scoring eleven plus successes at the given County pass mark.

The CEO's Report² examined the problem of drawing a line of demarcation between suitability of the pupil for a grammar or for a modern school course. He could give only two forms of guidance:

- "(1) various authorities - some of national repute - have indicated that 15 - 20% of the children are suited to a grammar school course;

1. Dev.Plan 1951, Introduction, p.xiii.
2. SchsSC/6/14.12.50, p.8.

- "(2) experience shows that allocation in the past has been rather liberal if the criteria for judging are (a) the number of children who complete the full grammar school course and (b) the number of children who pass the School Certificate Examination."

Apparently consideration of both these points strongly suggested that there was no deficiency in maintained grammar school provision, because the CEO concluded that if it were held that the proportion of children going to grammar school in Middlesex was too high (26% of the age group in 1950 against a national average of 21-22% in 1949) then,

"in particular, it should be remembered that 1% represents about 1,500 places and, therefore, a reduction of even 1% would mean that the places taken up at the independent schools could not be considered essential."¹

Cost per pupil given in the CEO's Report showed that it was more expensive to the County Council to send a child to a direct grant or an independent school, than to educate him in a maintained grammar school. But the Sub-Committee left the matter in abeyance.

Only after receiving a much fuller Report from the CEO the following November was a policy decision made. This consisted of converting some of the places offered at independent schools from free into assisted places; furthermore, free places were restricted to pupils living in certain parts of the County where the maintained provision was inadequate; pupils elsewhere were eligible for assisted places only. The reasons for this decision were argued by the CEO². Provision of grammar school places was generous in the County compared with other progressive Authorities, but it was unevenly spread. Often it was the older established districts - which had acquired their grammar schools in the years after the 1902 Act but where population had since declined - which had provision on a generous scale; newer districts - where houses had gone up in the 1930s - had less generous provision. Traveling difficulties prevented pooling of grammar school places on a County

1. SchsSC/6/14.12.50, p.8. Tables in a later section show that 270 pupils were placed in independent schools in 1950, which was just over 1% of the total eleven plus age group in that year.

2. SchsSC/7/1.11.51, p.85. CEO's Report.

basis, but it was possible within the five geographical zones, each containing several Divisional Executive areas.

The CEO's Report gave figures for 1951 which showed how many pupils in the eleven plus age group had sat the eleven plus test in each zone; how many and the percent who had reached the County qualifying mark; the number of places in all types of grammar schools available under existing arrangements; and the percent of the age group actually placed in grammar schools. In order to estimate the adequacy or inadequacy of grammar school places in each zone, the CEO held that borderline candidates of at most an extra one-third might be added to the number of those who had reached the County qualifying mark, since such candidates could also be considered suitable for a grammar school education. On this basis it became possible to assess whether existing provisions met requirements. In this connection it should be noted that the proportion of grammar school entrants going to fee-paying schools varied greatly between the five zones: In Zone 1 it was only 1.75%, Zone 5 8%, whereas in Zone 2 and 3 it was 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ %. For Zone 4 it was nearly 15%.

The principle was thus established that provision of grammar school places be regarded 'adequate' when pupils successful at the eleven plus test plus one third could be accommodated in grammar schools. On this basis, it was concluded that only two out of the five zones were in need of further supplementation of places, and in a third, places in fee-paying schools helped to make the grammar school provision match the number of eligible pupils¹. The Sub-Committee accepted that places at fee-paying schools should in future be taken on the basis of the CEO's recommendations. These included

- i) Maintained and direct grant grammar school places together met the approximate requirements of the County, but the distribution of places as between zones should be improved (e.g. some direct grant school places taken up by Zone 2 pupils might be transferred to Zone 3 pupils).

1. See detailed figures on page 361 and the CEO's comments on position of individual zones, taken from his Report submitted to the Schools Sub-Committee. (SchsSC/7/1.11.51, p.85).

- ii) A cut in free places at independent schools from a present maximum of 301 to 95. Applicants for such places should be resident in Zone 3 or 4; attending a County primary school at the time of transfer; qualify in the County eleven plus test.
- iii) Assisted places would be offered at certain independent schools to widen parental choice, without financial hardship to the parents. Pupils applying for these places could reside in any zone of the County, but the parents' application for financial assistance (on an income scale) would be examined under the following headings:
 - (1) Only pupils who had reached the County qualifying mark and where the CEO advised that the education contemplated was suitable for the pupil's age, ability and aptitude would be eligible;
 - (2) Is there room for the pupil in a suitable maintained school or one at which the County Council grants free places?
 - (3) Is the expenditure by the County Council reasonable?
 - (4) Does the proposal satisfy the conditions specified in the Manual of Guidance:
 - a) convenience of access, avoidance of traffic dangers, consideration that older brother or sister escorts younger one;
 - b) special facilities at the school - e.g. mid-day meal where both parents work;
 - c) preference for single-sex or mixed school;
 - d) family association with particular school;
 - e) medical reasons.
- iv) The total number of free and assisted places was to be limited so that together it would not exceed the number of places for which the County Council had previously accepted responsibility.

Table

The County Test and Grammar School Placements 1951*

Column Number	Size of 11+ Age Group taking County Test	Reaching County Qualifying Mark		% Age Group placed in grammar school	Total No. Places "Required" (Column 2 plus $\frac{1}{3}$ rd)	Total No. Places available 1951 (incl.col. 7, 8 & 9)	No. of these in Non-Middlesex Maintained Schools			Surplus (+) or Deficit (-)
		No.	%				Out-County Maintained	Direct Grant	Independent	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	
<u>ZONE 1:</u> Enfield Edmonton Southgate Tottenham Hornsey Wood Green Potters Bar	6,062	846	14	29	1,128	1,772	37	4	27	+644
<u>ZONE 2:</u> Hendon Finchley & Friern Barnet	2,306	487	21.5	36	649	841	20	52	53	+192
<u>ZONE 3:</u> Willesden Wembley Harrow N-W.Middlesex	7,267	1,510	21	24	2,013	1,725	71	111	106	-288
<u>ZONE 4:</u> Acton Ealing Hayes & Harlington Southall	3,937	663	17	21	884	825	36	72	49	- 59
<u>ZONE 5:</u> Brentford & Chriswick Heston & Isleworth Twickenham S-W.Middlesex	4,311	882	20.5	28	1,176	1,188	44	41	54	+ 12
							208	280	289	

CEO's Comments on Table**

- ZONE 1: No apparent justification for taking free places in any independent or direct grant schools. Some pupils were given free places at direct grant schools who had previously been in preparatory departments, and certain independent schools were denominational in character.
- ZONE 2: No independent school places needed to supplement provision. There was a close association with two direct grant schools, one independent day school, as well as with several LCC maintained grammar schools.
- ZONE 3: Shortage of places here could be alleviated by transferring to this Zone some of Zone 2's places at the two direct grant schools. In addition the County Council's building programme would have to make improvements in the provision in this area (details of plans were given in CEO's Report).
- ZONE 4: Shortage here would be alleviated by a comprehensive school proving itself with examination successes. In addition, one Borough would be getting a new grammar school, and a second was being considered for another Borough. There was growth of population here, but the area should have adequate provision with perhaps some to spare for Zone 3.
- ZONE 5: Increases in population would make additional places necessary in due course. Plans were in hand or under consideration.

Notes

* Source: Schs/7/1.11.51, p.85. The table was produced in order to decide whether each of the zones into which the County was divided had a shortage of grammar school places or not.

** Comments on table have been summarised from CEO's Report, Schs/7/1.11.51, p.85.

Tables and diagrams later in this chapter show how drastic a cut in places in fee-paying schools was effected in 1952, despite the willingness of the County Council to retain the same total number of places. This reduction was mainly in the number of places taken in independent schools. It is apparent that the fact that two thirds of these places were no longer free but assisted, had an effect on the number of parents applying for them. Indeed, in 1952 the County Council was prepared to take up in independent schools 100 free and 206 assisted places. Only a total of 198 qualified pupils applied for assisted places; for some schools the number of applicants was below the number of available places, for some it exceeded it. 131 parents were actually offered assisted places and of these 16 refused them on hearing the amount they would have to contribute themselves. In the event, only 91 pupils were awarded free, and 115 assisted places, a total of 206 compared to 278 pupils who were given free places in 1951¹. Of the 115 who accepted assisted places, 17 parents were granted full remission, whilst 28 paid full fees.

The conclusion might be drawn that the Authority's dependence on the fee-paying schools was reduced as a result of an appraisal of the Council's need for supplementation of maintained grammar school places. It is open to question whether such a review of policy would have been undertaken without the appearance of the Ministry of Education's Manual of Guidance. No further major review was conducted until the 1960s. Meanwhile, during the 1950s, the number of places at independent schools rose again, as did the proportion of free to assisted ones. Each autumn as the CEO reported on the transfer of pupils to secondary schools, including the number of free and assisted places taken, the Schools Sub-Committee discussed and settled policy for the following year's transfers.

1. SchsSC/8/2.10.52, p.72. CEO's Report. In 1955, even more parents refused assisted places. This even though the scale of aid had been revised that year. 177 assisted places were offered that year, but only 104 were taken up, and in 5 cases the place was declined when parents received the notice of assessment. (SchsSC/12/26.9.55, p.71, CEO's Report.)

Clearly the decision of the Sub-Committee to exclude children living in certain parts of the County from applying for free places at independent schools upset some people in affected areas. As early as February 1952, one Divisional Executive protested to the Schools Sub-Committee against this decision and the Sub-Committee decided that a comparative report should be prepared. In October, 1952, the following resolution¹ was considered in the light of such a report:

"That the Borough Education Officer be instructed to communicate with the CEO urging that the County Council take immediate action in the matter (of choice of grammar school) so that the restrictions now imposed upon ... children are removed forthwith."

The CEO pointed out that in 1950, 1951 and 1952 the maintained provision for the grammar school intake in the Zone in question had been adequate to accommodate all children who qualified in the eleven plus test and an additional one third for marginal pupils. This contrasted with Zone 3 where for every year there had been a marked deficiency. Thus

"it would be difficult to establish that there is any need for supplementation ... by taking up free places at independent schools, particularly as additional places are already provided at direct grant and at out-County maintained schools."²

The Sub-Committee therefore rejected the Divisional Executive's request. However, the rise in the age group to be transferred to secondary school evident each year except 1956 to the peak in 1958, presumably helped the Borough in question to secure the removal of restrictions for its children. The 1954 autumn review proposed that free places at independent schools might now be made available to all areas to supplement maintained provision, except Zone 1, and this was agreed³. In Zone 1 provision was considered adequate to meet the area's needs for grammar school places⁴. Zone 1 children continued to be debarred from free places until the abolition of the formal eleven plus in 1960, when such places were thrown open to all children. The anomaly of Zone 1 was then quietly dropped⁵, although the matter was reported to the

1. SchsSC/8/2.10.52, p.72. CEO's Report.

2. Ibid.

3. SchsSC/11/19.10.54, p.13. CEO's Report.

4. SchsSC/12/26.9.55, p.71. CEO's Report.

5. File 2: Meeting of Officers' Panel, 28.11.58.

Schools Sub-Committee in due course¹.

Rise in pupil numbers at the age of transfer also gave the independent schools the opportunity, year by year, to have their applications for more places, and preferably more free places, favourably considered by the Schools Sub-Committee. The Governors of a boys' independent school asked that their 8 assisted places be converted into 5 free and 3 assisted ones for the 1953 intake²; the Sub-Committee agreed to meet the need for supplementation in Zone 3 by taking up 5 free and 5 assisted places. The following year the same Governors offered another 10 places for the 1954 intake; the Sub-Committee agreed to take these as 5 additional free and 5 additional assisted ones³. By October 1954, other school governors had made their representations. School G applied for the restoration of free places, particularly in view of the school's association with Zone 3. One of the Roman Catholic independent schools wanted an increase in free places and also pressed for a revision in the scale of aid for assisted places, since many parents found the aid inadequate to accept the assisted places offered them. A Divisional Executive suggested that a proportion of free places be restored at two R.C. schools to meet the increased need for grammar school places for girls. The Governors of a Jewish grammar school wanted an allocation of free places in addition to their assisted ones. The Sub-Committee agreed that, subject to the agreement of the Ministry of Education and the Governors of the schools concerned, the number of free places at independent schools be increased by 40 from September 1955 with a reduction of 34 assisted places⁴.

The following year, School D requested an extension of their agreement with the County Council - instead of 5 free and 5 assisted places, they proposed a total of 15 places, of which not less than 10 should be free⁵. School D, an independent school with its normal entry at age 13 from preparatory schools, had after the war negotiated an

1. SchsSC/21/22.9.59, p.62.

2. SchsSC/8/2.10.52, p.76.

3. SchsSC/9/29.10.53, p.136.

4. SchsSC/11/19.10.54, p.13.

5. SchsSC/12/26.9.55, p.71. CEO's Report.

agreement with Middlesex County Council to take boys from maintained primary schools at age eleven. Another Roman Catholic school wanted their 20 assisted places cancelled and their 10 free ones increased to 20. In this case the Sub-Committee decided on 15 free and 15 assisted places¹. Other schools also applied for more free places, and the Sub-Committee agreed their request be borne in mind if additional places were necessary in future.

Thus over the years the dependency of the County Council on the independent schools grew once again after the severe cuts of 1952. The position, year by year, was as follows²:

Independent Schools

Total Number of Places taken up Annually

	1952	'53	'54	'55	'56	'57	'58	'59	'60	'61	'62	'63	'64
Free	91	95	106	147	143	173	194	163	165	166	170	179	133
Assisted	115	144	145	104	90	77	83	79	108	101	116	115	120
Total	206	239	251	251	233	250	277	242	273	267	286	294	253

However, as the final column for 1964 shows, there was quite a drop in the number of pupils placed in that year in independent schools, though it was still higher than in the first two years after the previous severe cut in 1952. The cut in 1964 resulted from the second major policy review undertaken by the Education Committee, between 1961-1963. On this occasion the initiative was taken not because of policy directives from the Ministry, but because the officers and heads of grammar schools in the County were increasingly aware of the consequences for the maintained schools of the creaming process by the fee-paying schools. The creaming of the ablest children into the fee-paying schools deprived the maintained grammar schools of talent on an increasing scale, since completion of new school buildings raised the number of

1. SchsSC/12/26.9.55, p.80.

2. Figures compiled from the CEO's annual Report on Transfer of Pupils to Secondary Schools, contained in the Minutes of the Schools Sub-Committee each autumn.

maintained grammar school places at the very time when the numbers of the eleven plus age group were falling. For the officers there was the other ever-weighty reason, expense, and their interpretation of the statutory requirements.

Whereas the 1950-51 review had affected in the main the independent schools through the curtailment of free and the introduction of assisted places, the 1961-63 review was to affect the direct grant schools as well. In 1962 these schools had an intake of 265, in 1964 it was only 225. A detailed account follows of the decision-making process between 1961-63, which resulted in the County Council cutting the number of places it awarded in the fee-paying schools.

In concluding this section, however, it is worthwhile pointing out that twenty years after the passing of the 1944 Act the non-state fee-paying schools continued to form an important part of the LEA's secondary school provision. By this time the Authority's own building programme had radically altered the number of grammar school places available, so much so that over 30% of the age group gained grammar school places in 1964. It would seem, then, that there were other reasons than deficiency of places which led the Authority to continue to depend on the 'external' grammar schools. The fact that the officers wanted to achieve a much larger cut in fee-paying places than was in the end accepted by the Education Committee and the County Council points to the existence of pressures and circumstances which prevented the originally proposed drastic cuts from being accepted. These pressures and circumstances are well illustrated in the next section and explain the County Council's dependency on fee-paying schools in new terms.

(b) Case Study of a Policy Decision: Reduction in Quota of Places 1961-63¹

A graph showing three trends in relation to each other, for the years 1950 to 1964, is given overleaf, based on figures tabulated in the next section of this study². Between 1952 and 1958, the peak year of entry to the secondary schools, all three trends were in an upward direction: the size of the normal age group transferring to secondary school; the total number of pupils transferred to grammar schools; and, of these, the total number of pupils transferred to fee-paying day grammar schools - all climbed upward. But whereas the first two reached their peak in 1958, followed by a downward trend thereafter, the number of pupils placed in fee-paying schools reached its all time peak only in 1963, the 1958-63 trend continuing to be in an upward direction.

The officers of the Education Committee were aware at an early stage that once the bulge had moved into the secondary schools, supplementation of maintained grammar school places with places in fee-paying schools would need re-examining. In 1958, the CEO drew the attention of the Schools Sub-Committee to this need³:

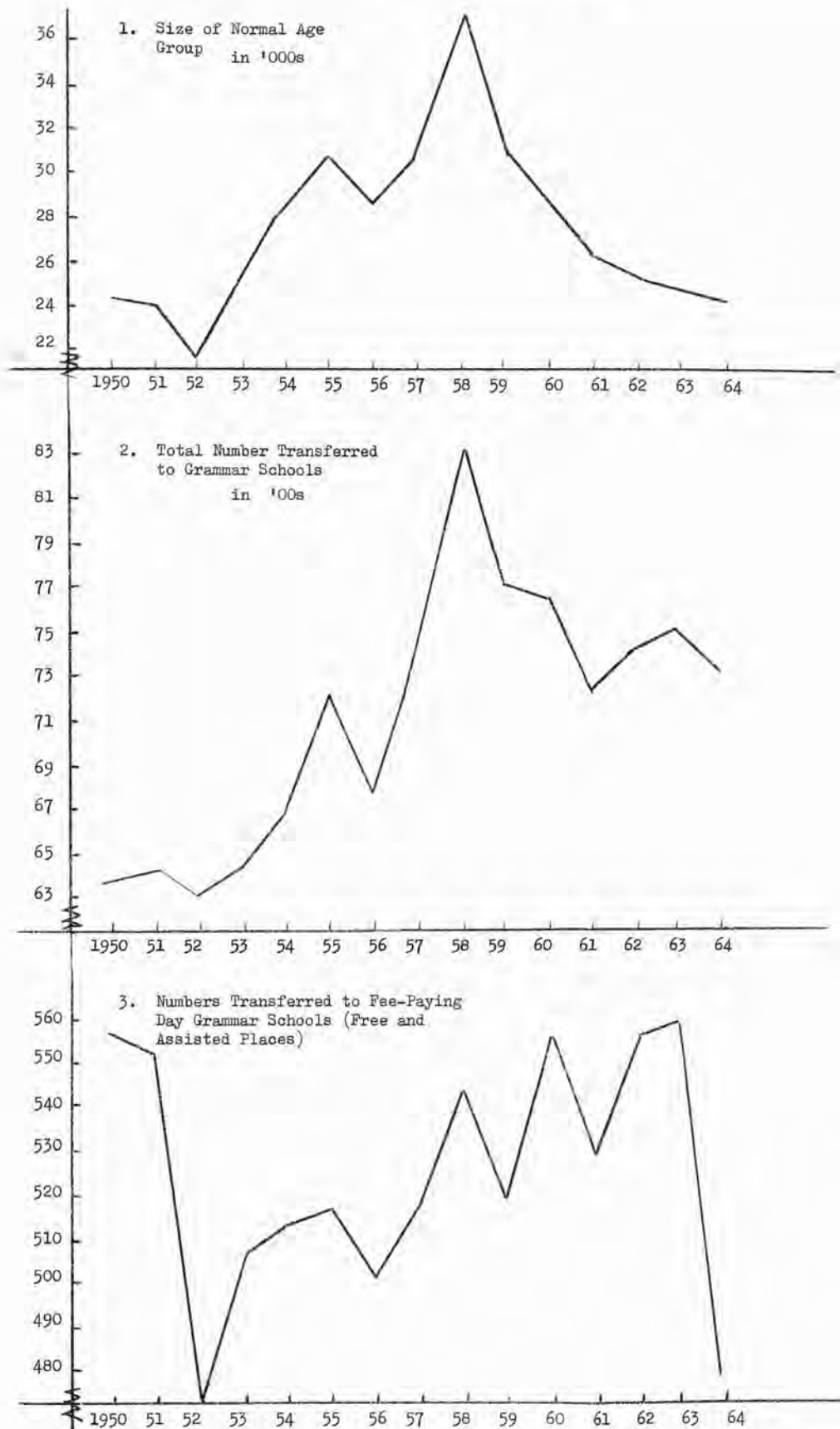
"It might be considered .. that now that the peak year of secondary pupils has passed into the schools, the list of additional places should be drastically revised and that all additional places should be 'assisted' rather than 'free'."

Soon after this, a meeting of education officers, psychologists and teachers was told that no serious reduction in additional places could be effected before 1961⁴.

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1. Unless otherwise stated, all information used in this section has been taken from File 3/20 at the Middlesex Record Office. The information contained in this File made possible this detailed case study.
 2. See Chapter 8(c), pp. 401-404.
 3. SchsSC/19/18.11.58, p.29, CEO's Report.
 4. File 2. Meeting held 18.12.58.

GRAPH

Secondary School Transfers - Middlesex LEA - 1950-1964



This graph has been compiled from figures taken, year by year, from Middlesex Schools Sub-Committee Minutes. It should be noted that Part 3 of the Graph includes both free and assisted places. Figures published by HMSO in List 69 (% of 13-year olds in fee-paying schools at LEA-expense) do not include assisted places.

It was the officers of the LEA, at County and Divisional Executive level, and grammar school teachers, who gave this matter detailed attention long before the officers' actual proposals for cuts in the number of places were put to councillors. In discussions at officer level, administrative methods were explored of reducing the number of parents who specified a fee-paying or out-county grammar school as their first choice. It was a case where administration by officers had policy implications which, it might be argued, ought openly to be settled by councillors as the ultimate policy makers. When in due course the policy issue was put to the Education Committee's Schools Sub-Committee, the officers did not get their way, which was very frustrating for them. Possibly this sort of experience leads officers to rely on 'administrative' ways of quietly influencing policy as much as circumstances permit. Where councillors are on their toes and an issue is in their eyes important, this in itself would make it more difficult for officers to settle policy administratively.

Anyway, it was in the summer of 1960 when the County's Education Officers at one of their regular meetings made it clear that they

"would like to have the question of reducing our use of LCC and independent schools discussed by the main panel as soon as possible."¹

The Officers' Panel mentioned here (a smaller group of Education Officers who dealt specifically with transfers to secondary schools) had in fact already decided that, if possible, Form AS2 (on which parents of ten-year olds stated their preferences for particular secondary schools) should in future include a warning of the possible dangers of selecting an independent school. It is not certain what "dangers" were meant - possibly the fact that if parents were offered an assisted place at an independent school shown on their form, they would be liable to contribute to fees, and to pay for travelling expenses. But then the existing AS2 Form gave ample warning about this. There was the consideration that reductions might initially be made in the independent schools

1. File 2: Meeting held 17.6.60.

rather than in the other two categories (direct grant and out-County maintained), "where costs are equivalent to our own maintained schools."¹

When the Panel met again, it was explained that the "question of the inclusion or deletion of individual schools from AS2 was an administrative arrangement". After considerable discussion on the Panel,

"it was finally agreed that the whole question should be looked at again when the lay-out of Form AS2 was reviewed next year with the object of 'playing down' the availability of places at Independent, Direct Grant and Out-County Schools."²

An office note suggests that this was a delicate issue even among the Education Officers, for the note states that "guarded reference" should be made to this item when the report on the Panel meeting was to be given to the full Officers' Meeting³.

The following year in April 1961, a much more detailed case was argued before all the County's Education Officers by one of their number. Discussions among officers in Zone 3 had preceded this. The smaller size of the transfer group in forthcoming years had led these officers to review the position in their zone. Extra grammar school places had become available under the building programme since 1945: three schools in North West Middlesex, two in Harrow - with one more to be built. In addition, two Roman Catholic grammar schools, previously independent, had become voluntary aided in Harrow, thus releasing County grammar school places for other pupils. This would make possible a reduction in the size of classes from 33 or 34 to the prescribed 30. But more than this (the letter was put to the April meeting of all Education Officers):-

"... it has seemed to us that the time has come to dispense with places in direct grant and independent grammar schools. If these or similar measures are not adopted, it appears to us that not only will many more pupils unlikely to benefit from a grammar school course as at present envisaged be admitted to such schools with a consequent lowering of standards, but also the effect on secondary modern schools will be harmful. The varied and

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1. File 2: Typed office note for meeting on 10.10.60.
 2. File 2: Meeting of Officers Panel, 10.10.60, item 3 on agenda.
 3. By 1963, Form AS2 had been considerably modified. Much less attention was given to the fee-paying schools. For details on these administrative changes see Chapter 5(e), pp.190-197.

successful extended courses in secondary modern schools, which have been developed to meet the needs of those pupils of good but not outstanding ability, or perhaps with more diverse aptitudes, will be checked if not entirely halted, since those pupils whose particular abilities have necessitated these courses will no longer be in the secondary modern schools. Nor can the possibility that the development of seven-year courses in secondary modern schools will be endangered be overlooked."

The Assistant Education Officer wrote a note across this letter

"A good deal of uneasiness expressed. First step should be to 'write down' out-county schools in AS2".

When the CEO replied to the above letter, he said that the drop in transfer groups had not gone unobserved, and some thought had already been given to the need for places in independent and direct grant schools. Offers had been made earlier that year by the LCC of extra places in their grammar schools, but Middlesex had declined these although "with out-county maintained schools one is up against the problem of parental choice and Section 76 of the Education Act".

From the same zone came an expression of opinion from one of the Headmasters of a maintained grammar school, who claimed to speak on behalf of colleagues in other schools. This reached the CEO via the local Education Officer, in July 1961. This Headmaster stated that there was now no shortage of grammar school places in Middlesex, which originally had been the reason for using fee-paying schools. Yet there seemed to be "maintenance, if not an increase, of the numbers of Middlesex awards to independent schools". This had the defect that the cost to ratepayers was very high whilst maintained schools were short of money; furthermore,

"the 'top' flight of normal grammar school pupils is being removed from schools where they would normally expect to be and where they would be very well cared for. The principle seems to have been established, in action if not in theory, that the academically brightest children should be removed from the state schools. The effect of this on these schools, both academically and socially, must be deleterious, as the numbers now involved are quite high. The long-term effect will be to establish a two-tier system of education, instead of a parallel system. In turn, this will affect the recruitment of staff for the state schools. The grammar schools of the country have a deservedly high status, and I think few of us would wish to see their reputation fall. The children involved are precisely those who would lend academic inspiration and social tone to our schools."

On 8th December, 1961, the Education Officers were presented with a full report by the CEO. It asked whether in the changed circumstances public expenditure on 'external',¹ grammar school places was justified. Full information was given on the fall in numbers at age of transfer; it was argued that all pupils assessed suitable for a grammar school course could have been accommodated in Middlesex maintained grammar schools, yet 752 pupils had been admitted to 'external' grammar schools. The figures were broken down for each school and each Divisional Executive. The Authority's obligations under Section 6 of the 1953 Act, and under Section 81 of the 1944 Act² were outlined, and the CEO concluded with this summary:

- (1) Middlesex ratepayers had greatly valued opportunities afforded by free and assisted places for able pupils at a wide range of schools;
- (2) Cancellation or drastic restriction of Middlesex places "might have a serious or even catastrophic effect on the direct grant and many of the independent schools whose recruitment has for many years been based on a large Middlesex contingent";
- (3) Schools must accustom themselves to variations in admissions. It seemed probable that conditions similar to those of 1958 would recur - and that supplementation of maintained places would again be necessary in the future.

The meeting agreed that "...despite the difficulties involved there should be some restriction of present quotas of places." Officers were to submit their individual views in writing. Not all officers seem to have done so, but seven letters are retained in the File. They reflect partly the particular views of the officer and partly the special position of his area. One strongly favoured a large cut in places because County selective schools had vacancies; another wanted the Authority to take only the free, but not the reserved, places at direct grant schools, and to cut the number of assisted places at independent schools. Complete discontinuance of places in external schools was

1. The expression 'external' grammar schools is used here to cover all secondary day grammar schools used by the Authority not maintained by Middlesex County Council. Thus it covers the direct grant and the independent schools inside or outside Middlesex, and the out-County LCC schools.

2. See Chapter 2(d), especially pp.67-69, where these statutory obligations were fully explained.

opposed on a variety of grounds. One officer, for instance, held that "the English way of life ... emphasises the freedom of the individual within limits to make his own choice; for instance it is still possible to have private treatment outside the NHS". A marginal comment made in the County Council office states "Parents can still pay for independent school if they so wish". Another man held that opposition in his area would be considerable if places eagerly sought by parents were severely curtailed. Officers from two areas pointed to their continued need for additional places, because the size of classes was above the prescribed number or because it was still not possible to place all qualified children in County grammar schools. Finally, a view of considerable interest was expressed about the out-County maintained schools by one officer. Whilst parental choice should be given adequate scope, the Authority ought to ensure that such choice was valid on, say, religious or family association grounds. He objected to the cudors that went with the gaining of a place "outside Middlesex" in the eyes of parents and the primary schools:

"This may be very well for the places at Independent and Direct Grant schools where, indeed, the places have still something of the flavour of 'scholarship' places. It seems to me entirely wrong that the Heads of maintained LCC grammar schools should be set in a position to pick and choose when the Heads of our own schools are required to take what is offered."

Furthermore, the LCC in a sense added insult to injury by not allowing "free trade". Whereas the LCC was content to allow Middlesex pupils to attend London grammar schools, it was most reluctant to allow London pupils to attend Middlesex schools:

"Cases I have in mind are where no place in a grammar school has been available in N.W.London and the LCC would rather place the child in a comprehensive school in London than concede a grammar school place in Middlesex; and this in spite of parental choice."

After this series of consultations between officers, the Committee was brought in early in 1962. The policy making process now became extremely complex. The time-chart overleaf should make it easier to follow the sequence of events. Between February 1962 and March 1963 there was constant activity at officer level between the CEO and the

(text continued on page 376)

Time ChartDecision-Making Process 1960-1963Cuts in LEA Places taken at Fee-Paying Schools

Date	Consultation and Decisions within Middlesex			Consultation with Other Bodies		
	Officer Level	Education Committee and Schools Sub-Com.	Schools	Ministry of Education	LCC	RC Diocesan Authorities
<u>1960</u> June & October	Panel of Officers; Administrative Action to cut places considered.					
<u>1961</u> April	Officers' Meeting: Case for cuts considered.					
July			Complaint from Head Maintained Gram.Sch.			
December	Officers' Meeting: CEO seeks views prior to report to Education Committee.					
<u>1962</u> January February	Written Comments from Officers reach CEO. Cuts in fee-paying schools made by LCC noted by officers.	Chairman shown draft Report. CEO's Report to Schools Sub-Com. Decision: CEO to consult re local needs. Sub-Com. of 3 established.				
February March	Zonal meetings of consultation between CEO staff & Education Officers.					
April	Draft Report for Sub-Com. of 3 prepared.	Chairman shown draft Report. Sub-Com. of 3 accepts Officer proposed cuts		Contact between CEO & Ministry established.		
May			Fee-paying Schools informed proposed cuts. Comments invited.	Meeting between Ministry & CEO representatives	Meeting between LCC & CEO representatives.	First RC protests to CEO.
June	CEO, subsequent to withdrawal of Report, consults Cty. Treasurer.	Schools Sub-Com: CEO's Rept. includes comments from schools, proposed original & revised cuts. Report withdrawn by Schools S-C Chairm.				
July	"Stalemate" reached on Report.	Chairman Education Com. shown Treasurer's Report on cost fee-paying places.				
September	"Off the record" telephone conversat. with RC representat.					RC approach for meeting.

(continued)

Time Chart (continued)

Date	Consultation and Decisions within Middlesex			Consultation with Other Bodies		
	Officer Level	Education Committee and Schools Sub-Com.	Schools	Ministry of Education	LCC	RC Diocesan Authorities
<u>1962</u> (cont.) October		Chairman meets RC representatives. Schools Sub-Com. considers CEO's Report and RC protests. Agreed no cuts till 1964. RC school proposals amended.				RC representatives meet Education Committee Chairman.
November		Education Committee refers back Schools Sub-Com.Report.	Schools informed no cuts in Sept.1963		LCC informed no cuts in Sept.1963.	RCs informed no cuts till Sept.1964.
December		Schools Sub-Com. decides to re-submit same Report to Education Committee				
<u>1963</u> January		Education Committee carries Schools Sub Com. Report.				
February		County Council accepts Education Committee Report.				
March			Schools informed of decision		LCC informed of decision re LCC Schools	RCs informed of decision re RC schools.

Divisional Education Officers, and the CEO and the County Treasurer; direct contact between the CEO and the Chairman of the Education Committee at certain crucial points; five meetings of the Schools Sub-Committee at which reduction of places was on the agenda and one meeting of a three-man ad hoc sub-committee devoted to this issue only; and consultations between the CEO on the one hand and the schools, the LCC, the RC authorities and the Ministry on the other.

Whenever the councillors became involved, they were presented with very full factual reports covering the decline in numbers of pupils being transferred, the rise in the percent of the age group placed in grammar schools, the cost of sending children to 'external' grammar schools, the effect of this situation on the County's modern schools. Middlesex had 6,600 maintained grammar school places whereas the lower numbers of transfers meant that 5,750 places sufficed to give 25% of the age group grammar school places, 5% above the national average, but that was justified since the "general intellectual quality of Middlesex children is high."

The Schools Sub-Committee accepted that "consultations should be held as to the need for additional secondary places at present taken up..."¹ and set up a special ad hoc sub-committee of the Chairman and two others to deal with the matter:

"In the meantime no additional places to those already held would be taken up..."

Detailed proposals for making cuts were then worked out, in the first instance through another round of consultations with the Education Officers in each of the five zones. The majority of officers accepted the necessity for substantial cuts, though two were opposed: one of them held that "we should continue to take up all the places we could and that more pupils should be offered grammar school education." A third one accepted the necessity for cuts, but was worried about the reactions of his Divisional Executive and of parents (his Borough sent 17% of its

1. SchsSC/25/20.2.62. No page numbers. CEO's Report.

annual grammar school transfers to fee-paying and out-County schools, yet had an acute problem of inadequate recruitment to its own two grammar schools).

The draft report subsequent to these consultations was prepared by officers, approved and amended by the CEO, approved by the Chairman of the Education Committee. Even during this early re-drafting, certain schools originally cut out altogether were retained on the grounds that

"It might be a tactical move to retain some 'assisted' places in order to counter opposition from the RCs that these schools are being treated differently from the other RC schools."

When the Report was presented to the ad hoc sub-committee¹, it was stated that the Schools Sub-Committee at its meeting in February had decided on the information available that a "substantial reduction" in existing commitments was called for. This represents a slightly different rendering of the minuted decision quoted on the previous page. It may be that the slight variation in wording indicates the officers' keenness to achieve reductions which some councillors were possibly not keen to allow. The officers were aware that the LCC, also faced with smaller transfer numbers, had already agreed on a cut of free places from 500 to 350 over 2 years, although they had not touched the RC schools, since there was a shortage of such places.

The report stated that the Divisional Education Officers "almost without exception" took the view that

"the number of Middlesex places at direct grant schools (these are all free places) should be reduced by about 50%, in two stages. ... A reduction in the number of places in the independent schools of 50% was also proposed",

with special consideration being given to denominational, particularly RC schools. Within the revised quota of places for the independent schools there should be a shift from 'free' to 'assisted' places. It was the majority view that there should be no quota of places at LCC maintained schools but that

"Middlesex pupils should be permitted to attend if the parents advanced an adequate reason for choosing the school, e.g. on

1. Meeting held 17.4.62.

denominational grounds, strong family connection, special facilities at the school. It would be left to the discretion of the local education officer to send a pupil forward on these grounds and also to decide whether the parent would be required to pay travelling expenses."

All told, the six direct grant schools and nineteen independent schools (ten RC and 9 others) would have been affected as follows had the CEO's first round of proposals been accepted. The last column in the Table on the next page shows the cuts as finally modified and then accepted by the County Council. At the end the figures have been converted into per cent cuts made and originally proposed.

(See Table on page 379)

The sequence of events between April 1962 and February 1963 has now to be told. After the ad hoc sub-committee of three had accepted the CEO's recommendations set out in the Table overleaf, consultations with the interested parties opened. The officers expected "some opposition because many of the schools have come to depend upon a quota of Middlesex pupils each year."¹ By the time the Schools Sub-Committee met for the second time to deal with this matter, a full report could be given on the views expressed by governors of the affected schools.

Most of the schools had replied expressing regret and concern about the proposed cuts² in the number of Middlesex pupils for whom the County Council would in future accept responsibility. The direct grant schools, on the whole, pleaded that at least the 25 per cent 'free' places be taken by the LEA - an argument reinforced by the Ministry of Education view (see below); the non-denominational independent schools in some cases stressed their long association with Middlesex pupils and asked that less severe cuts be made; the Roman Catholic independent schools all pleaded strongly for reconsideration of the proposed cuts and of the change from free to assisted places - parents, they stated, did not readily apply for assisted places.

1. CEO's Report to ad hoc sub-committee meeting 17.4.62.

2. CEO's Report to SchsSC, 26.6.62.

TableQuota of Places in Direct Grant and Independent SchoolsCuts proposed in April 1962 and Cuts finally accepted in 1963

	Present Quota	CEOs Suggested Cuts ¹ as put before Ad Hoc Sub-Committee 17.4.62.		Cuts accepted by CC on 27.2.63.
	<u>1962</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1964</u>
<u>Free Places:</u>				
Direct Grant	265	188	122	225
Independent: Non-Denominational	85	44	23	55
Roman Catholic	79	47	21	63
Total Free*	429	279	166	343
<u>Assisted Places:</u>				
Independent: Non-Denominational	48	53	47	58
Roman Catholic	79	111	137	95
Total Assisted	127	164	184	153
Grand Total	556	443	350	496
<u>Percent Cut on 1962 Quota:</u>		%	%	%
Direct Grant		29.1	54.0	15.1
Independent: Non-Denominational		27.1	47.4	15.1
Roman Catholic ²		-	-	-
All Fee-Paying Schools		20.3	37.0	10.8

Notes

- * In addition, the quota of 136 free places in LCC grammar schools was to be abolished, such places to be available only in response to 'justified' parental choice as explained in the text on pages 377-378. If these places are included in the first column of the 1962 quota, then the proposed cuts for 1963 and 1964 respectively would have been of the order of 36 and 46.5 per cent.
- Figures for three schools have been omitted from these two columns in order to include only those schools which were still under discussion at the end of negotiations. Otherwise the original and final cuts would not have been comparable.
 - For the Roman Catholic schools only a shift from free to assisted places was proposed throughout the discussions, never a cut in the total number of places. Ultimately only 16 of the 79 free places were converted into assisted ones.

The independent Roman Catholic schools had clearly also sent "distressed letters" to their Bishop, who in turn made representations to the LEA. Considerable expenditure had been undertaken by these schools without public assistance to provide education in keeping with County standards at a time when the County was short of places. The RC population was increasing and there was pressure on all aided RC grammar schools. Whilst aware of the economic and financial problems of the LEA, it would be

"very sad were the impression to be given that a solution should be sought at the expense of the denominational rights of parents as set forth in Section 76 of the 1944 Education Act."¹

Whilst the views submitted by individual schools were summarised in the CEO's June Report to the Schools Sub-Committee, this additional RC pressure was not at that stage mentioned. More contact with RC representatives occurred later in the year.

In addition, during May informal discussions took place between the Officers of the Authority and, first, the Ministry of Education and, then, the LCC. It is interesting to note in passing that no reference was made in any of the documents circulated to the Schools Sub-Committee to the fact that such informal discussions had been held. Yet the views expressed by the Ministry and by the LCC were clearly reflected in the advice the CEO gave to the Schools Sub-Committee in his Reports circulated for subsequent meetings. It is not known whether councillors were verbally informed of these informal discussions.

The Ministry of Education's views were sought in particular about the direct grant schools. A strong plea was made by the Ministry's officials on behalf of the direct grant schools. The summary, written by a Ministry official, ran as follows²:

"We emphasized that the Ministry could not object in principle to the proposed reduction in .. places at direct grant schools as the decision in this matter is essentially one for the Authority. Also we fully appreciated .. that it was the financial advantages of keeping your maintained grammar entry at normal level that had prompted these proposals.

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1. Letter from Bishop to CEO dated 28.5.62, later reproduced in CEO's Report to Schools Sub-Committee held 23.10.62.
 2. Communication from Ministry to LEA dated 17.4.62.

"I did, however, plead for as much latitude as possible from the Authority in implementing these cuts at direct grant schools, both with a view to easing the problems of the schools themselves and to reducing parental discontent, much of which, as you will appreciate, finds its way here.

"Our first plea, namely that the schools should have as much notice as possible of the reductions, seemed to be largely met in that they are being spread more or less equally over 1963 and 1964. If the cuts can be delayed a little longer, .. so much the better.

"The difficulty for the schools ... is that a reduction which leaves them with less than 25% of their entry taken up by LEAs in the form of 'free' places (i.e. pupils with a 2-year primary school qualification) means that the Governors have to make up the 'free' places to 25%. As this means the admission of additional suitably qualified pupils without payment, this entails an annual loss of income which has to be made good in some way. Generally speaking the only other way is to raise the tuition fees, a thing nobody likes to do. If, therefore, it were possible so to arrange the reductions that no school had less than the 25% 'free' places taken up by LEAs, it would be most helpful for the schools.

"... if the axe fell primarily on the 'reserved' rather than the 'free' places, there was less likelihood of difficulty for the schools..."

In reply, the CEO wrote¹

"... the authority looks upon the direct grant schools as part of the state provision of schools and would wish to consider them as an integrated part of the general provision. It has always been, and always will be, the policy of the County Council to make freedom of choice available to parents over as wide a field as possible.

"In the light of the position, you may rest assured that the authority will endeavour to avoid harm to the direct grant schools and limitation of parents' choice."

It will be remembered that the quota of places taken at the out-County maintained grammar schools was to be abolished. The LCC officials involved in the informal discussions took the view that certain administrative difficulties would arise if there were no quota. Whilst the need for cuts was appreciated, it would help Heads and administration if they had some idea of Middlesex requirements. The Middlesex representative pointed out that no publicity would be given to LCC places and that parents would have to give valid reasons for selecting them. It was therefore difficult to know how many places would be required until March.

1. Communication from LEA to Ministry dated 21.4.62.

It was likely that the demand for denominational places would be good, and possible that sufficient candidates would opt for valid reasons for the other schools to take up as many places as before. The LCC representatives expressed preference for Middlesex County Council contacting schools direct, since if the LCC approached them, they would feel obliged to support the governors, whereas on the other hand they had sympathy with Middlesex's desire to cut down the number of places. The Middlesex County Council accordingly informed the LCC schools direct, inviting them to make representations. Subsequently the LCC added that it was hoped a scaling down of the quota would take place rather than its abandonment in favour of individual applications.

In line with comments made by the schools and the Ministry, less severe cuts were now proposed to the Schools Sub-Committee than had been placed before the ad hoc sub-committee of three, and they were to come into effect over three, instead of over two, years.¹

Apart from setting out yet again the statutory position under Sections 8 and 76 of the 1944 Act, and under Section 6 of the 1953 Act, the CEO advised the Schools Sub-Committee to bear in mind the following points²

- (1) Parents should be given as wide a choice as practicable;
- (2) In view of the requirement to avoid unnecessary public expenditure, it would be "improper to allow an undue proportion of 'empty' places in the maintained schools";
- (3) "The desirability of considering the direct grant schools as an integral part of the grant-earning educational system and the freedom of the Committee to utilise these schools";
- (4) Existing commitments to the fee-paying schools meant that any sudden curtailment of places would be uncharitable;
- (5) The overall maintained provision was adequate, but there may be areas which required special consideration.

Point (3) is obviously an attempt to meet the pleas of the direct grant schools themselves and of the Ministry on their behalf, whilst point (4) shows a softening of attitude towards the independent schools,

1. For details of modified proposals, see Table on next page.

2. SchsSC/25/26.6.62. CEO's Report.

Table

Modified Cuts in Quota of Places in Direct Grant and
Independent Schools proposed in June 1962¹

	<u>1963</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>
<u>Free Places:</u>			
Direct Grant	225	190	168
Independent: Non-Denominational	55	38	29
Roman Catholic	47	27	22
Total Free	327	255	219
<u>Assisted Places:</u>			
Independent: Non-Denominational	58	63	64
Roman Catholic	111	130	135
Total Assisted	169	193	199
Grand Total	496	448	418
<u>Percent Cut on 1962 Quota:</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
All Fee-Paying Schools	10.8	19.4	24.8

probably in response to their own representations, possibly also in anticipation of the views of the Sub-Committee. The recommendations² in turn were tailored accordingly, except that no softening of tone was yet introduced as far as the LCC schools were concerned:

1. Source: SCHs/SC/25/26.6.62. CEO's Report.

2. Ibid.

- (1) At most, the reduction of places taken in direct grant schools should be gradual;
- (2) Places in out-County maintained schools should be available only if parents specifically asked for them and justified their choice;
- (3) No new free independent school places should be taken except in particular areas where a shortage in maintained provision still existed;
- (4) "Free places at independent schools should be a planned reduction over a considerable period keeping in mind the wishes of parents, the need of the schools (which in many cases have rendered and do render a considerable service to the community and to the Authority), and the school population of the County.";
- (5) "That to give expression to Section 76 and the denominational interests, there should be an expansion of the number of assisted places on request by parents, provided this does not materially affect the maintained provision."

Without stating any reason, the Schools Sub-Committee Chairman withdrew this Report for further consideration. The fact that the CEO on the following day consulted the County Treasurer about the financial implications in law of taking additional free places at independent schools, suggests that some councillors were concerned about the effect on the independent schools. This at a time when cuts were under discussion. The County Treasurer was informed that¹

"There is a possibility with regard to places at independent schools of the suggestion being made that, in relation to the requirements of Section 76 of the 1944 Act, the Committee should consider taking up additional free places."

In replying, the Treasurer expressed disappointment that the CEO's Report had been deferred².

"It is most difficult to give an opinion on a proposal to take up additional free places at independent schools without knowing precisely the circumstances in each area from which the pupils are to be drawn. ... As I see it, the guidance given to the Sub-Committee in your report is that the Education Committee, before paying the full fees ... at an independent school, must satisfy itself that there is a shortage of places both in Middlesex maintained schools and in schools maintained by other LEAs to which the pupils could be sent with reasonable convenience, and that by reason of this shortage, education suitable to the

1. CEO to County Treasurer, dated 27.6.62.
 2. County Treasurer to CEO, dated 4.7.62.

age, ability and aptitude of the pupil cannot be provided except at an independent school.

"In spite of the requirements of S.76 of the 1944 Act (which does refer to 'the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure') if the taking up of additional free places at independent schools results from causes other than the shortage of maintained places, the taking up of those places could be open to criticism on financial grounds."

He concluded that the CEO's Report showed that for the County there was a sufficiency of grammar school places, but that the availability of places in different parts of the County must

"affect the reasonableness of the proposal to take up 'additional free places' and might of course justify all or part of it."

The District Auditor shared this view.

Whilst the County Officers were now frustratingly aware that "we have reached stalemate on the question of our report"¹ a memorandum was prepared for the Chairman of the Education Committee which set out the cost of County Council places in fee-paying and out-County maintained schools. On the assumption that the modified cuts proposed over the three years 1963-65 were implemented, and that the County Council paid three-quarters of the cost of assisted places (which past experience showed to be a reasonable assumption), it was shown that after some five years the cumulative saving to the Authority would be £60,000 to £70,000 per annum². This would have reduced the cost of such places to the County Council by up to 25 per cent, since the 1962/3 cost, based on present quotas, was £278,000. It was added that savings would be partly offset by the cost of educating pupils in Middlesex schools, but that this was likely to be marginal as the pupils were spread over a large number of schools in various areas.

It has not proved possible to find out whether the Schools Sub-Committee Chairman had withdrawn the CEO's Report on 26.6.62 primarily because of the aggrieved reactions of the Roman Catholic schools and authorities. What is certain is that the Bishop had protested in writing

1. Office Note dated 11.7.62.

2. Communication from County Treasurer to Chairman of Education Committee dated 31.7.62.

to the CEO a month before that withdrawal occurred, that his letter had not been mentioned in the June Report, and that probably during September the Officers resumed their contact with the Roman Catholic spokesmen. In an "off the record" telephone conversation it was suggested to the Secretary of the Westminster Schools Commission that the Bishop might write and ask "what's happening and will a meeting with the Chairman help?"¹ Such an approach was made² and a date arranged when the Chairman of the Education Committee would receive an RC representative. The Bishop could not come himself on the proposed date. Before agreeing to see a deputy, the CEO made it very clear that the Chairman of the Education Committee would expect any deputy to speak with full authority³.

The upshot was that when the next meeting of the Schools Sub-Committee was held, both the CEO and the Chairman reported fully on the views of the Roman Catholics, who strongly objected to the reduction in free places. The Bishop's earlier letter was now reproduced as part of the CEO's Report and the Chairman recommended amendments which were much more favourable to the Roman Catholics than those earlier put forward. These were as follows⁴.

Table

Cuts in RC Independent Schools

	<u>Proposed by CEO</u> <u>26.6.62.</u>		<u>Proposed by Chairman</u> <u>23.10.62.</u>	
	<u>Free</u>	<u>Assisted</u>	<u>Free</u>	<u>Assisted</u>
1962	79	79	79	79
1963	47	111		
1964	27	130	63	95
1965	22	135		

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1. Undated office note.
 2. Secretary, Westminster Schools Commission to CEO, 24.9.62.
 3. Correspondence between CEO and Secretary of the Westminster Schools Commission arranging meeting on 19.10.62 between RC representative and Chairman of Education Committee.
 4. SchsSC/26/23.10.62. No page numbers.

These new proposals covering places taken by the County Council in Roman Catholic independent schools were the major change proposed to and accepted by the Schools Sub-Committee in October. The total effect for the RC schools would be a decrease by 16 in free places, and an increase in assisted places by the same number. However, all schools were to benefit from the recommendation of the Chairman, which was accepted, that only the first stage of the proposed reductions was to be implemented, and that the revised allocations would not become operative until September 1964, so as to allow time for adequate notice to schools and parents. This meant that for the direct grant schools and the independent non-denominational ones the 1964 County Council intake would be as proposed for 1963 by the CEO in his Report dated 26.6.62; for the independent RC schools, the intake in 1964 would be in line with the Chairman's new recommendations as set out on the previous page.

As far as the out-County LCC maintained grammar schools were concerned, here, too, some concessions were now made. No longer was their quota to be abolished; instead, the recommendation was that "the present quota of places should in future be regarded as a maximum figure".¹ The number of pupils entering the LCC schools from Middlesex was in fact to rise from 231 in 1963 to 256 in 1964, the year when in the direct grant schools and the independent schools the modified cuts were implemented!

It remains to relate some further delays in getting the Schools Sub-Committee's decision through the Education Committee, prior to it being accepted by the County Council. The Minority Party (Labour) objected to the shift from free to assisted places for the independent schools. In the Education Committee, an amendment was carried to the effect that the Schools Sub-Committee give further consideration to the proposals "as regards the proportion of free and assisted places at independent schools."² An RC Labour Councillor³, who raised this

1. SchsSC/26/23.10.62.

2. EC/117/12.11.62, p.268.

3. Interview: Cr. Maple.

matter in his own Group, on denominational grounds, had obtained the support of his Party colleagues on 'means test' grounds. He also maintained that some Conservative Roman Catholic councillors voted against their own Party; in any case, the amendment was carried by 25 votes to 12. The Labour spokesman stated that the Minority Party accepted the cuts for direct grant and out-County schools, but felt the proportion of free and assisted places at independent schools should remain unaltered. It was not only payment of fees by parents which was at stake, but also the child's travelling expenses and school meals¹. A child's transfer to secondary school should not be governed by its parents' financial circumstances. When the Schools Sub-Committee did reconsider the position, the Labour spokesman repeated that cuts in independent school places was acceptable, but there was no "educational reason for increasing the number of assisted places ... compared with the number of free places."² In fact, for the RC schools, no reduction in places was proposed, only a shift from free to assisted ones by 16. As was to be expected, the Schools Sub-Committee decided (by 9 votes to 4) to re-submit the same report and resolution to the Education Committee. Once more another Labour Councillor argued that the policy was

"... deplorable in that pupils would now have to face two hurdles - firstly they would have to pass the entrance examination and secondly they would have to be tested on financial grounds, before they could take up one of the additional assisted places."³

To this the Chairman of the Schools Sub-Committee replied that

"if the old ratios were maintained, then the number of assisted places would have to be cut since there were places in the maintained schools. The Sub-Committee had tried to be fair to the non-maintained schools all of whom had been consulted and who had agreed the proposed changes."

This time the Education Committee accepted the proposed changes, the County Council did so some weeks later⁴. The LCC, the Roman Catholic Authorities and the schools were informed in March about the County Council's final decision.

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1. No financial help is given for these expenses to parents whose children hold assisted places, unless complete remission of fees is granted.
 2. SchsSC/26/18.12.62.
 3. EC/117/14.1.63.
 4. On 27.2.63.

Discussion and Conclusion of Case Study

The first noteworthy point is the time it took to reach a decision on reducing the number of places taken by the LEA in 'external' grammar schools. Awareness of the problem came in 1958, the year of peak entry into the secondary schools. It was 1960 before officers commenced discussions, and councillors on the Schools Sub-Committee were not brought in until 1962. The County Council endorsed their decision in 1963, but the cuts were not implemented until 1964. Some of the delays, no doubt, were the natural result of the complex two-tier administrative structure. But on the previous occasion when policy concerning placement in fee-paying schools was reviewed, a decision was reached more quickly. In August 1950 the Ministry of Education Manual of Guidance appeared, in December 1950 the CEO reported thereon to the Schools Sub-Committee, in November 1951 his concrete proposals were considered and adopted, and in 1952 the number of free places at independent schools was down by two thirds, beyond which the exercise of parental choice was limited to awards of an assisted place. The main reason for delay was probably the extent of consultations in the 1960s and the much stronger and more vocal opposition to the intention of the majority of the County's officers drastically to cut places in fee-paying schools. No consultation seems to have taken place about the policy decision in the early 1950s¹.

An important consequence of this delay was, of course, that any cuts ultimately agreed on were implemented later rather than sooner, and this at public expense. Indeed, in 1963 the number of placements in independent schools actually rose, compared with 1962, and these transfers

1. Although nearly a year elapsed between the Committee's first and second consideration of the matter, the CEO in November 1951 held that "parents may consider this inequitable" (that only children in certain zones of the County would be eligible for free places at independent schools), and further stated that "the reactions of the schools and of the parents to these proposals are not known"* (that free places be cut drastically and assisted places be offered instead). Despite this lack of knowledge about the views of the affected parties, the CEO's recommendations were accepted by councillors and implemented in 1952.

* SchSC/7/1.11.51, p.85, CEO's Report.

were effected by the County Council in the spring and summer of 1963, after the County Council had, in February, accepted the cuts for 1964. Children entering the schools in 1963 would most likely remain there until 1968.

Next, the outcome of the decision-making process has to be stated in summary form: at a time when there were something like 850 places to spare¹ in the LEA's own maintained grammar schools (on the assumption that 25% of the age group was a reasonable proportion to place in selective schools) the officers were able to cut the 556 supplementary places taken in 1962 in fee-paying schools by a mere 11% in 1964, as against their original proposal to cut by 20% in 1963 and 37% in 1964. If the Roman Catholic independent schools are omitted, since in their case no cut was proposed, then the officers' proposal to cut places in direct grant schools by 54% in the second year and the non-denominational independent schools by 47%, was whittled down, for both, to a mere 15% cut². As for the Roman Catholic schools, they retained, instead of lost, most of their 79 free places - only 16 were switched from free to assisted instead of 58 as originally proposed.

Thirdly, what emerges is that the criterion for justifying supplementary places taken by an LEA in fee-paying independent schools leaves the door wide open to a variety of interpretations. No one participating in the decision-making process seems to have challenged the fact that there were vacancies in the maintained grammar schools, due to the decline in number of pupils transferring and the completion of new schools. It would seem, then, that the justification to supplement the Authority's provision of secondary school places on grounds of insufficiency in the maintained sector no longer held, unless it were argued that a much higher proportion of children than the national average should go to grammar schools. To this the teachers in the maintained

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1. SchsSC/25/20.2.62, CEO's Report.
 2. It is of interest that LCC cut places in direct grant and independent schools by a total of 40%, in three instalments, between 1961-64. The reason was that the bulge had gone through the schools. (Source: File 3/20: No date on information. Not clear whether the cuts in question were proposed or actual cuts).

grammar schools would certainly have objected because they had already complained about the lack of talent among the pupils placed in their schools due to creaming by the fee-paying schools. In addition, lack of talent for extended courses at modern schools was another cause of concern to teachers and officers.

The Ministry of Education's Manual of Guidance which clarified the powers of LEAs to pay fees at independent schools under the 1944 Education Act, and Section 6 of the 1953 Act, stated that the whole fees for pupils at independent schools should be paid by an LEA only when the Authority was satisfied that there was a shortage of places in its own and other accessible LEA maintained schools¹.

The case study shows that statutory requirements exercised comparatively little influence on the number of free places taken by the Middlesex Education Committee at independent schools now that contraction was called for. True, the officers who initiated this policy review, took great pains to explain the statutory position. It was on the basis of this that they recommended drastic cuts. But once their proposals became known to those concerned, the major influence on policy was exercised by the interested groups who stood to gain from the continuance of the free place arrangements. These groups, mainly the schools themselves or their spokesmen, did their utmost to mitigate the proposed cuts, with considerable success.

The consultations over free places in the Roman Catholic independent schools bears this out most clearly. Before the affected schools and the Bishop exerted pressure on the Authority, the ad hoc sub-committee of three councillors endorsed the officers' proposals, and

"so far as RC places were concerned the S/Com. considered that RCs had been treated v. generously in the past and that in future they should get only what they were entitled to in accordance with the Act."²

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1. At the time of the bulge, between 1953-58, shortage in maintained grammar school places had been considered sufficient reason to increase the number of free places at independent schools in response to application by the schools. Circumstances then favoured the schools, and their dependence on a Middlesex contingent had grown. Circumstances were now reversed.
 2. File 3/20. Handwritten note across file copy of Report submitted by CEO to ad hoc sub-committee on 17.4.62.

It could not be argued that in Middlesex there was need to "make up deficiencies of an educational character"¹, since Roman Catholic children could have had places in maintained grammar schools. It is true that such places might not have been in RC schools, because there was a keen demand for all available places in the RC voluntary aided grammar schools. It was precisely for this reason that officers proposed not to cut the number of supplementary places at RC independent schools but instead to convert most of the free into assisted ones. This was entirely in accordance with the officers' interpretation of the Manual of Guidance and the 1953 Act: denominational preference for an independent school was not sufficient grounds to secure a free place, although the Authority could offer assisted places in order to widen parental choice.

Yet the RCs made their case against the cuts on the strength of Section 76 of the 1944 Act. According to their interpretation of the Act, parents had the right to choose on denominational grounds. They did not mention - as did the County Treasurer when consulted by the CEO - that parental choice under Section 76 (even leaving aside the problems raised by the whole question of free places in independent schools under the 1953 Act) was subject to the "avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure". Experience had taught the RCs that parents would not readily apply for assisted places, and that if the RC independent schools lost their free places, parents would often accept (choose?) a place in a maintained grammar school which was not RC.

The concessions made in 1962 to the independent schools in response to pressure were held to be justified because of the position of the schools, not of the County Council. The CEO had asked the Committee to bear in mind that existing commitments to the schools would make sudden curtailment uncharitable. The schools had come to depend on a Middlesex contingent of pupils and should not be made to suffer unduly now. The result of these concessions was that maintained schools would simply be left with vacancies in grammar schools, whereas the independent schools would be treated generously. The Chairman of the Education Committee

1. Manual of Guidance, Schools No.1, Choice of Schools, para.16. 23.8.50.

stated that the Committee

"... had a debt of gratitude to the independent schools who had given such generous help in the years since the war and the Committee wished to be as generous as possible to those schools."¹

It might be asked why pressure exerted by the interested groups was so successful in resisting the officers' proposals. Responsibility for the final decision about the number of places at fee-paying schools squarely rested upon the shoulders of the councillors². Why did the elected representatives yield to pressure? Such a question is always very difficult to answer satisfactorily. But interviews helped to throw light on the likely explanations.

It should first be said that in certain circumstances, councillors are able to withstand pressures of this kind, in particular if the issue is one of clear party policy. None of the evidence suggests that on the issue of LEA placements in fee-paying schools either party group on the Middlesex County Council had a clear-cut policy. There was evidence of cross-party voting on at least one occasion. This probably made both party groups much more accessible to pressures exercised by interested groups inside and outside the Council.

The Conservative Chairman of the Education Committee for one had initially supported the proposals of his officers, but later had changed his mind. Pressures were exerted on him both from within his own party group and from RC representatives outside the Council Chamber. A Labour councillor, who had influenced thinking within his own party group, stated that there were several RC Conservative councillors who were also exercised about this matter. He thought they had exerted pressures within the Conservative group; indeed, on one occasion they had joined Labour councillors in a division. Subsequently the Conservatives had put the whip on³.

1. SchsSC/26/18.12.62.

2. Since issue of Circular 350 by the Ministry of Education on 24.3.57, it has not been necessary for an LEA to seek the Minister's approval before taking up places at independent schools. Previously approval had to be sought under the 1953 Education Act, Section 6.

3. Interview: Cr. Maple.

The former Deputy Education Officer¹ held that Roman Catholics were able to exert power because they occupied many positions of influence. She confirmed that there were a number of RCs on the Middlesex Education Committee, mainly but not exclusively among the Conservatives. She said that RCs seemed to be able to maintain that if their child passed the eleven plus, it was entitled to a grammar school education at an RC school, and if a maintained voluntary aided RC school could not offer a place, then the child had to be sent to another RC school. Asked why the Bishop's letter of protest was not put to the Schools Sub-Committee at its next meeting, she held that that must have been some manoeuvre of the Chairman. What could an officer do if the Chairman first stated he was with one and then, two weeks later, someone had talked him round and he had changed his mind? This comment clearly suggests that the Deputy Education Officer was of the view that RCs had exercised influence over the Chairman, who is always likely to be a crucial person on an elected body.

The former Chairman, when interviewed², was asked whether the RCs had protested. He agreed they had, and added that they were much keener on their education than the Church of England, and spent a great deal of money on it, which they got back from their people - "they force them to pay up". This suggests that the former Chairman had been impressed by the RCs keenness and financial sacrifice to secure education for their children in RC schools. It is impossible to say whether electoral reasons weighed in the Chairman's mind or in that of other councillors. By the time this particular decision was made in 1962, it was already known that the Middlesex County Council would be dissolved in the reorganisation of local government in Greater London, and that Middlesex County councillors would therefore not be facing the electorate again, unless it were for another local authority body.

The situation of the direct grant schools merits some attention in this summary. The role of the Ministry is of special interest in the

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1. Interview: Miss Trout.
 2. Interview: Cr. Fox.

decision making process. That the schools themselves hoped for more generous treatment when notified of the proposed cuts of 54% over two years was not surprising. But they had an eloquent advocate in the Ministry of Education. The Ministry pleaded firstly for as much notice as possible of intended cuts to the schools, so as to ease their problems and to reduce parental discontent; secondly, it hoped that at least the 25% free places would still be taken. Otherwise the Governors would have to admit pupils without payment to comply with the regulations, which would impose a loss of annual income and force them to raise their tuition fees. It will be recollected that the CEO assured the Ministry that the Authority looked upon the direct grant schools as part of the state provision and would endeavour to avoid harming them.

The special position of the direct grant schools in the state system was dealt with by the CEO even before the Ministry of Education was consulted. In reporting to the Schools Sub-Committee, he pointed out that for years the Committee had taken all the free and reserved places. But now circumstances had changed and a cut of 54% was proposed, which would have cut all the reserved, and presumably some of the free places as well. Once the CEO had consulted the Ministry, however, his advice to the Committee changed. Although no reference was made, at least in writing¹, to the fact that the Ministry had been consulted, less severe cuts were suggested.

Again, it might be asked why the Ministry and the schools between them achieved a reduction in the proposed cuts from 54 to 15%. The Ministry spokesmen had emphasized that

".. the Ministry could not object in principle to the proposed reduction in the number of places at direct grant schools as the decision in this matter is essentially one for the Authority..."²

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1. Miss Trout in an interview maintained that the withholding of this information was not deliberate, that in any case everyone knew what the Ministry's views were about the direct grant schools.
 2. Summary of Informal Discussion between officers of the Ministry of Education and MEC. Communication from Ministry to CEO dated 17.5.62. In view of the formulation here quoted of the Ministry view, it is interesting that Middlesex officers advising the new Outer London Boroughs about selection (in 1964) stated that the Ministry expected LEAs to take up 25% of places at direct grant schools. (Source: File 1).

So here, too, final responsibility rested with the councillors. Apart from RC pressure, perhaps another form of general pressure was the discontent of vocal or potentially vocal parents, which would make itself felt among councillors, some of whom would themselves be vocal parents, or possibly ex-pupils of the external grammar schools.

At this stage it is worthwhile recalling that one of the Divisional Education Officers had voiced his problems sharply during the discussions among officers. The two maintained grammar schools in his Borough were suffering badly because of the fall in the number of entrants; so much so that a proposal had been advanced that the intake of the maintained grammar schools in the whole zone might be restricted to 27 pupils per form, instead of the prescribed 30, provided some adjustment could be made in pupil teacher ratios, as otherwise setting and options would be detrimentally affected. This was the Borough from which over the previous five years an average of 17% of the selective pupils had been placed in external grammar schools, well above the average in the County. At the meeting held among officers of zone 5, the County's Deputy Education Officer assured the Borough Education Officer concerned that

".. if his Divisional Executive made a recommendation that ... pupils should be precluded from free places in independent and direct grant schools, this would be given careful consideration."¹

The Officer concerned "did not think his Divisional Executive would do this". His reasons throw some light on the nature of the pressures at local level. He had already consulted one of the relevant groups in his area about recruitment to the Borough's maintained grammar schools. One way of solving the problems of these maintained schools would be to curtail external grammar school places. His report² had made it clear that the fee-paying schools and parents would object if the number of places previously taken, which in 1965-67 would not be needed, were discontinued for three years and then taken up again. But in fairness to the Middlesex grammar schools, he argued, some scaling down of the number of free and assisted places in external grammar schools should be considered,

1. Minute of Meeting, 23.2.62.

2. Report for Grouped Governing Body for County Secondary Schools Meeting 10.1.62.

since this would be equitable to all schools concerned¹,

"... and the opportunities for some Middlesex children to go to other schools, which have become traditional and expected by parents, would remain, at not much less than the present proportion".²

Evidently parents "expected" to have facilities to opt out of the maintained school system at public expense. It should be remembered that about one third of the parents whose children passed the eleven plus test stated an external grammar school as their first choice³. The Deputy Education Officer stated⁴ that parents in Middlesex were very litigious minded, that she had carried on many a correspondence with an aggrieved parent. Parents were personally concerned, they pressed their case, but they were not usually an organised pressure group. In her view, in 1962, opposition to the officers' proposed cuts in external grammar school places had not come from parents, but from the Roman Catholics and the schools concerned. Parents had not been informed on the matter and not organised.

Other participants in the decision-making process assessed parental influence as more important. Clearly the Borough Education Officer whose views were dealt with above was one person to do so. The Ministry of Education spokesmen had also drawn attention to the desirability of

"reducing parental discontent, much of which ... finds its way here",⁵

when they pleaded the case of the direct grant schools.

The existence of parental discontent over access to grammar schools in general and fee-paying schools in particular is confirmed by evidence other than that drawn from this case study. In 1956, a Memorandum⁶ was prepared for the Labour Group on the County Council by two of its members. It described the selection procedure at the age of eleven, and one section dealt with parents' complaints:

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1. Presumably this meant the maintained and the fee-paying schools.
 2. Report for Meeting of Grouped Governing Body for County Secondary Schools, 10.1.62.
 3. File 1: 1957 figure.
 4. Interview: Miss Trout.
 5. Summary of Informal Discussion, 17.5.62.
 6. Records of the London Labour Party: MCC Labour Group. "Education in Middlesex", 1956.

"Every year, when notice is given in May to each parent of the school to which the child is to be transferred, several hundreds 'phone and visit the Education Offices during the next week or so. Many of these also send in written appeals later..."

The Memorandum listed the first complaint as "failure to obtain a place in an independent or direct grant school", and added that parents whose first choice had been for a fee-paying school frequently mistakenly assumed that if their first choice failed to materialise, their child had a prior claim to the maintained grammar school next on their list. If their child was placed in another maintained school, this led to the second type of complaint. This document showed that Labour councillors were well aware of the sensitivity of parents on the placements their children secured at age eleven.

Part II of this thesis amply illustrates the difficulties that were encountered in attempts made to establish comprehensive schools within a selective educational system in the late 1940s. One of the difficulties was organised parental opposition to the creation of catchment areas for comprehensive schools, within which children would not have sat the eleven plus test, and therefore not gained admission to a grammar school. In one area 3,000 people had signed a petition against this policy which was submitted to the County Council in May 1949. Protests were also made direct to the Ministry. It was on the results of the eleven plus test that parental preference for a grammar school education depended. If the child passed, then there was the chance of a place at an external or at a maintained grammar school. On that occasion parents secured change of policy - children in the particular areas were permitted to sit for the test if their parents so desired.

In this discussion of the case study comment has been made on the delays in arriving at a decision and the content of the decision was summarised. The statutory requirements were then reviewed, and these were shown to have supported the endeavour of the officers to implement drastic cuts in the number of places the Authority took in fee-paying schools. As the cuts eventually made were anything but drastic, an explanation was sought for this. The pressures which had come into play during the decision making process were identified: the Roman Catholics

on behalf of R.C. parents and the denominational independent schools, the Ministry of Education on behalf of the direct grant schools, the schools on their own behalf and, finally, the parents who stood to gain from the opportunity of a place for their children at external grammar schools. The first three were organised forms of pressure, exercised overtly by direct representations to officers and/or councillors. The influence of parents over the decision making process is much more subtle. There are occasions when parents exert influence as organised groups. But that was not so on this occasion except for representations on behalf of RC parents. Yet the above discussion does point to a subtle influence of parents over policy, mainly because officers, councillors and the Ministry are aware that parents are likely to protest against certain policy decisions. It seems, then, that the very possibility of protest from vocal parents influences what decisions are made.

(c) Number of Pupils in Fee-Paying Schools¹

The total number of children transferred annually at the age of eleven from primary to secondary schools between 1950 - 1964, and the number and proportion of these who were placed in grammar schools, was given in Chapter 5². In this part of the study these figures are broken down into more detailed categories, in order to show the extent to which the fee-paying schools were used by the County Council. At the same time figures will be given of the annual entry of pupils into the non-Middlesex (out-County) maintained grammar schools. Using the grammar schools of another LEA (usually those of the LCC) was also a method of supplementing the number of places available within the County of Middlesex³. Thus when the Education Committee discussed placements of its pupils in schools other than its own, the position of these schools came under scrutiny as well. It is therefore useful to include information about recruitment into them.

First, then, the out-County maintained grammar schools (mainly LCC). Annual entry ranged from 171 to 256, making up approximately $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}\%$ of the total grammar school entry. The following table sets out the number of pupils for which Middlesex was responsible who took up places each year:

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1. Figures in this chapter are taken from Schools Sub-Committee Minutes year by year, from meetings held in September, October or November. Percentages calculated by present author.
 2. See page 151. All figures exclude pupils educated privately, except those sent to fee-paying schools by the County Council. There are no figures for the County as a whole of the number of secondary school pupils educated at fee-paying schools other than those for whom the County Council accepted total or partial financial responsibility.
 3. Some pupils resident in the LCC area were received into Middlesex maintained schools. But many more were sent by Middlesex to LCC schools, thus making for a net increase in grammar school places for Middlesex children.

TablePupils placed by MCC in Out-County Maintained Grammar Schools

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of total grammar school placements</u>
1947	185	3.13
1948	188	3.09
1949	190	3.10
1950	194	3.05
1951	202	3.15
1952	188	2.99
1953	213	3.32
1954	202	3.03
1955	215	2.99
1956	171	2.52
1957	218	2.92
1958	199	2.39
1959	204	2.65
1960	219	2.86
1961	223	3.07
1962	231	3.10
1963	231	3.08
1964	256	3.49

Next, the figures for the six direct grant schools used by the County Council are tabulated, showing an entry ranging between a minimum of 225 and a peak of 286, comprising some 3 to $4\frac{1}{2}\%$ of the total selective entry:

TablePupils placed By MCC in Direct Grant Schools

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of total grammar school placements</u>
1947	256	4.33
1948	245	4.03
1949	264	4.30
1950	286	4.50
1951	274	4.27
1952	267	4.24
1953	266	4.14
1954	262	3.92
1955	265	3.68
1956	268	3.95
1957	267	3.57
1958	267	3.21
1959	277	3.60
1960	283	3.70
1961	262	3.61
1962	269	3.61
1963	265	3.53
1964	225	3.07

Next come the independent schools, of which there were approximately twenty, half of them Roman Catholic. In these the annual entry figures ranged from 188 to 294, amounting to between 3 and $4\frac{1}{2}\%$ of the total grammar school intake:

Table

Pupils placed by MCC in Independent Schools

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of total grammar school placements</u>
1947	181	3.06
1948	280	4.61
1949	261	4.25
1950	270	4.25
1951	278	4.33
1952	206	3.27
1953	239	3.72
1954	251	3.76
1955	251	3.49
1956	233	3.44
1957	250	3.35
1958	277	3.33
1959	242	3.14
1960	273	3.57
1961	267	3.68
1962	286	3.84
1963	294	3.92
1964	253	3.45

Finally, it is interesting to consider various figures in relation to each other. First the total numbers of children transferred from primary schools at eleven plus into grammar schools:

TableNumber of Middlesex Children Entering Grammar Schools 1947-64

Year	Total in all Grammar Schools		Maintained Schools		Fee-Paying Schools
	Number	% of Normal Age Group	MCC Schools	Out-County Schools	Direct Grant & Independent
1947	5,915		5,293	185	437
1948	6,079		5,366	188	525
1949	6,135		5,420	190	525
1950	6,359	26.04	5,609	194	556
1951	6,417	26.75	5,663	202	552
1952	6,298	29.02	5,637	188	473
1953	6,425	25.50	5,707	213	505
1954	6,677	23.80	5,962	202	513
1955	7,198	23.54	6,467	215	516
1956	6,778	23.83	6,106	171	501
1957	7,469	24.24	6,734	218	517
1958	8,327	22.41	7,584	199	544
1959	7,700	24.91	6,977	204	519
1960	7,650	27.01	6,875	219	556
1961	7,255	27.82	6,503	223	529
1962	7,446	29.48	6,660	231	555
1963	7,502	30.26	6,712	231	559
1964	7,333	30.22	6,599	256	478

A better grasp of the importance of the 'external' grammar schools to the County Council is gained by expressing the figures in percentages:

Table

Children entering Grammar Schools not Maintained by MCC: 1947-1964

Year	All 'External' Grammar School Pupils	Fee-Paying Pupils Only	
	% of Selective Entry	% of Selective Entry	% of Normal Age Group
1947	10.52	7.39	
1948	11.73	8.64	
1949	11.65	8.55	
1950	11.80	8.75	2.28
1951	11.75	8.60	2.30
1952	10.50	7.51	2.18
1953	11.18	7.86	2.00
1954	10.71	7.68	1.83
1955	10.16	7.17	1.69
1956	9.91	7.39	1.76
1957	9.84	6.92	1.68
1958	8.93	6.54	1.46
1959	9.39	6.74	1.68
1960	10.13	7.27	1.96
1961	10.36	7.29	2.03
1962	10.55	7.45	2.20
1963	10.53	7.45	2.25
1964	10.01	6.52	1.97

Except in the years of the bulge intake into the secondary schools, Middlesex Education Committee always depended on schools other than its own for placing at least one in ten of its grammar school pupils. Rather less than a third of those pupils placed in external grammar schools went to out-County maintained ones, rather over two-thirds to fee-paying schools. The tables on the preceeding pages show year by year the extent to which the County Council depended on the fee-paying schools in implementing the 1944 Education Act. It is of particular interest that

this dependence continued, in fact increased both in total numbers and proportionately, up to and including 1963. This coincided with a fall in total number of pupils in the normal age group transferring to secondary schools from the 1958 peak, whereas the proportion placed in maintained grammar schools was rising because some 1,000 extra grammar school places annually were now available in the maintained schools of the Middlesex County Council.

But in 1964 cuts were made, and unlike the cuts of 1952, which mainly affected the independent schools, on this occasion places in both direct grant and independent schools were considerably curtailed, though much less severely than the officers of the Education Committee wished. The officers had proposed¹, in 1962, that the intake into the direct grant schools be cut (on existing quotas) by 29% in 1963 and 54% in 1964. Places at independent Roman Catholic Schools were not to be cut, but those at the non-denominational independent schools were to be reduced by 27% in 1963 and 47% in 1964. After consultations, only one cut was made, in 1964, of 15% for the two types of schools, still leaving the County Council with financial responsibility for an intake into the fee-paying schools of 478 pupils, at a time when Middlesex maintained grammar schools could have accommodated most of them.

1. See previous section, especially page 379.

(d) Financing Pupils in Fee-Paying Schools

This section has to be very sketchy. But some information can be given. On the two occasions when the Schools Sub-Committee was involved in a major policy review about the use of the fee-paying schools, the CEO's Report included comparisons of the per capita cost of sending pupils to such schools or of placing them in the County's own grammar schools. On both occasions the CEO drew attention to the fact that places in fee-paying schools cost the County Council more than those in its own schools. For the direct grant schools this is only true if the amount of the Ministry's capitation grant is added to the fees paid by the County Council. The following figures are taken from the two Reports¹:

Table

Average Cost per Annum to the County Council of Places
in different kinds of Grammar Schools

	1950		1962
	In Middx.	Outside Middx.	
Middlesex Maintained	?	-	£104
Out-County	-	£45	£ 92
Direct Grant	£44*	£38*	£ 80 ⁺
Independent	£25-82	£69	£114

Notes

* To this must be added £20 if the total cost in terms of public expenditure is to be established, since in 1950 the Ministry of Education's capitation grant was £20 for every pupil in the upper school.

⁺ In 1962, the capitation grant, which should be added, was £43 for the younger pupils and £81 for sixth formers.

1. SchsSC/ 6/14.12.50, p.8. CEO's Report.
SchsSC/25/20.2.62. CEO's Report.

In considering the figures, it should be borne in mind that the County Council would have had to carry the cost of educating pupils sent to fee-paying schools if they had been placed in County schools instead. In 1955 the CEO drew attention to this¹. The cost of educating pupils in fee-paying schools rose year by year; partly because the grammar school course is a comparatively long one, so that there had been a cumulative effect, partly because fees had risen and the scale of aid for assisted places had been improved. He added that the money spent on these fees should not

"be regarded as entirely additional expenditure. ... If they (the children) were not at these schools, the County Council would have to make provision for them in its own schools .."

He calculated the amount it would have cost to educate pupils at fee-paying schools in maintained grammar schools instead².

"It would not be reasonable to suggest that the whole of this amount should be offset against the service in question, as of course some children could be absorbed into existing County Council schools ..."

This last point becomes particularly relevant in the 1960s, after the bulge entry into the secondary schools subsided, and when it could be argued that all children eligible for grammar school education (except in certain areas of the County) could be accommodated in maintained grammar schools. Indeed, the CEO did so argue³; to place 25% of the age group in the early 1960s in grammar schools needed 5,750 places. By this time Middlesex County Council had available in its own grammar schools 6,600 places - a "surplus" of 850! Moreover, in 1962 the CEO

1. SchsSC/13/13.12.55, p.41. CEO's Report: Item dealing with cost of educating pupils at fee-paying schools.

2. Ibid. The calculation worked out like this (CEO's figures for 1954/5, rounded to the nearest thousand £s.):

2,227 day pupils at direct grant and independent schools

a) total cost at fee-paying schools £168,000

b) cost at County grammar school £144,000
(calculated at £64 per pupil)

Difference between a) & b) £ 24,000

3. SchsSC/25/20.2.62. CEO's Report.

took the view that the cost of fee-paying places to the County Council was at least as much as if the County Council provided new places themselves, and that by utilising extra places outside the County's own schools, vacancies occurred in County schools which would not result in an equal saving.¹

So far, figures have been given of the cost per pupil per annum. Some figures are available of the County Council's total expenditure on the fee-paying schools. The following show the rising monetary cost over the years:

Table

Total Cost to MCC of placing County-sponsored Pupils in
Direct Grant and Independent Day Schools²

Year	Total Number of Pupils	Cost
1948/9	2,286	£ 92,140
1955	3,029	£189,585
1958	2,959	£209,265
1961	2,890	£252,954

From another source³ it is possible to break down the figures for 1961, as follows:

Table

Cost to MCC of placing one Year's intake of County-sponsored
Pupils in Direct Grant and Independent Schools (1961)

	<u>Range of Fees</u>	<u>Total Cost to MCC</u>
Direct Grant (6 schools)	£ 69 - 85	£21,129
Independent:		
Non-Denominational	£115 - 165	£17,725
(9 schools)		
Roman Cath. (10 ")	£ 47 - 135*	£13,115
		<u>£51, 969</u>
* one school charged £165 for over 15-year olds.		

1. File 3/20.

2. Sources: 1948/9 - SchsSC/3/22.9.49, p.79, CEO's Report.
1955/61- File 4.

3. File 3/20.

Assuming that the majority of children remain in these schools for five years, the figure of £51,969 may be multiplied, and we arrive at a total annual cost to the County Council for all its pupils at these day grammar schools of just over a quarter of a million pounds, much the same as shown in the previous table for 1961.

Chapter 9Case Study of one Fee-Paying Schooland its Relations with the Middlesex County Council¹Introductory

In September, 1937, School B was opened in new buildings in a suburban area of Middlesex. The official opening ceremony followed on December 7th; photographs in the national press showed many smiling girls welcoming the Duchess of Gloucester, who was the guest of honour. The local paper reported that Middlesex County Council had paid £30,000 towards the building of the school, and that the Chairman of the Middlesex County Council, in seconding the vote of thanks to the Duchess, had said²:

"... and if any more educational foundations cared to come into Middlesex on the same terms they would always be welcome (laughter and applause)."

No doubt this part of the Alderman's speech was taken from the notes prepared by the County Council's officers. The Middlesex Education Authority was desirous of increasing the number and variety of educational facilities and

"... is not only assiduous in providing these facilities but is always ready to welcome any new types of school with which other governing bodies may wish to present us. The coming of School B to [Middlesex] is therefore a mutual advantage in that it offers to the Governors a new sphere in which to give expression to the wishes of 'the pious founder' and at the same time gives to the ... County a type of secondary school not hitherto available. It

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1. Unless otherwise stated, information in this chapter is drawn from the three Files on School B at the Middlesex Record Office, which contain full details of the negotiations between the Governors, LEA and Board of Education concerning capital grant for building the School and its repayment.
 2. Thames Valley Times, 8.12.1937.

also has the additional advantage that, apart from the building grant made to the Governors by the Middlesex County Council, no cost of maintenance will fall on the rates of the County as any grant that is necessary is received direct from the Board of Education. Although there is no cost to the rates for maintenance the school may be regarded as forming an important part of the educational provision of the neighbourhood."¹

Without the capital grant of £30,000 from Local Authority funds, the School Governors would have been unable to leave their old premises in inner London, where changes in the social composition of the population had resulted in declining pupil rolls for this secondary school for middle class girls².

The School was an old foundation, named after a certain lady who died in 1708, leaving her personal estate for "charitable purposes". The following year her Executrix decided to use the legacy for the education of poor girls, and in 1711 a School was opened in one of the areas of inner London. The Schools Foundation (Church of England) has administered the Trust ever since. In 1875 the School was moved to another area of London, and was governed under Schemes of the Charity Commissioners (1868 and 1875) and, more recently, of the Board of Education (1905, 1910 and 1933)³. It is now an independent School with the object of giving a liberal education to girls up to University entrance standard⁴ and admission is by an entrance examination, which pupils in the junior school must pass before entering the main school at the age of eleven.

A case study on this School is of special interest in several respects:

- i) At the time when the capital grant for building the new School was given by the Middlesex County Council, School B was receiving direct grant from the Board of Education. Schools receiving direct grant had to comply with the Board's Secondary Schools

1. Undated office typescript.
2. SchsSC/3/22.949, p.80. CEO's Report referred to the establishment of the School as a "middle class" one under a Scheme of the Charity Commissioners of 28.6.1875.
3. Girls School Year Book 1952.
4. Annual Charities Digest 1966.

Regulations 1935, which included a provision that every year a minimum of 25% of the previous year's intake had to be admitted as free place holders, and that candidates were eligible for free places only if they had attended a public elementary school for at least two years immediately before entering the secondary school¹. This ensured that these schools, grant-aided by the state, educated at least some children from the state elementary schools.

- ii) The Order of the Board of Education dated 26.1.1937, under which the capital grant by the Middlesex County Council to the School Governors was authorised, set out an agreed condition. This made it perfectly clear that the grant was given because the Governors were responsible for a "Public Secondary School carried on in accordance with the conditions from time to time in force" under which the Board of Education recognise Secondary Schools for the purpose of payment of grant. The Order stipulated that in the event of the school at some subsequent date becoming independent, the Governors would repay "to the Council a sum bearing the same proportion to the value at the time of such event arising of the site, buildings, works, property or equipment in respect of which the Council's grant was made as to the amount of the Council's grant bore to the total original expenditure...". In other words, no grant would have been given had the School been independent in the 1930s, and repayment was to be at current valuation if the School became independent subsequently. It will here be related that the aspect of current valuation of the original grant was lost sight of when repayment was negotiated after the war.
- iii) The School became independent in 1945, and the Governors' reason for taking this decision will be examined. Briefly, the Governors were disturbed by the effect of the new Direct Grant Schools Regulations issued under the 1944 Education Act on the entry into

1. S.R. & O, 1935, No.679. Secondary Schools Regulations dated 15.7.1935. Article 15(c) and (d). It should be added that the Regulations permitted a different, presumably lower, percentage to be prescribed for particular schools.

the School. Whereas the 1935 Regulations for Secondary Schools had specified 25% to be the minimum proportion of places which annually had to be given as free places to pupils who immediately preceeding entry to the school had attended for at least two years an LEA elementary school, under the new Regulations the LEA could, in addition to the 25% free places, insist on taking up another 25% of 'reserved' places, thus causing half the annual entrants to the school to be chosen by the Authority, at least in the first instance, even if the Governors retained the ultimate say over admission of particular individual candidates. The case study therefore reveals the importance attached by the School Governors to independent control over entry.

- iv) The case study also reveals the way in which private and public provision of school places is interdependent. Both when School B desired to move from inner London and when its new location in Middlesex was settled, LEA and Board of Education policy makers had to consider the effect of removal and re-establishment on the existing maintained schools in the two areas before a final decision was made. Indeed, the LCC was able to delay the removal of the School by a few years, arguing to the Board of Education that the local education service would be detrimentally affected, which resulted in the Board withholding its approval until the School presented its case a second time somewhat later. The LCC could not have exerted such a power of delay had the School been independent in the 1930s.
- v) The case study therefore illustrates that direct grant schools are not entirely free agents, and that in return for public financial support, the governors have to accept some restrictions over their autonomy. However, it also illustrates that a very advantageous position can be achieved by such a school with the help of public funds, i.e. the acquisition of new and spacious buildings in an attractive area, and that at a later stage the governors can take these assets on very favourable terms into the independent sector over which practically no public control is exerted.

The story of the negotiations between the School Governors, the Middlesex Education Committee, the LCC and the Board of Education will now be told chronologically. It concerns the removal of the School from an inner Borough and its re-establishment in suburban Middlesex. In 1930 the first approaches were made by the School Governors to the Middlesex Education Committee; the Governors were "beaten at the moment"¹ and had to remain in London for the time being; negotiations were renewed in 1934 and in May 1935 the Middlesex County Council approved the terms on which the County Council would make a capital grant to the School Governors. There followed much interchange regarding the purchase of land, approval of building plans and tenders, and, in 1937, an application for an increase of the original grant when costs were found to be higher than anticipated. Then, in 1945, began the protracted exchanges about the Governors' desire to cease direct grant status for the School, and about whether, and on what terms, the capital grant was to be repaid. This matter was settled only early in 1952.

1. MEC Memo dated 23.2.1931 - probably an office record of a telephone conversation with the Clerk to the Governors of School B.

(a) Negotiation of Capital Grant¹

In June 1930 the Clerk of School B's Foundation wrote to the Secretary of the Middlesex Education Committee, requesting an interview to discuss the removal of the School from London. Early in July the Chairman of the Middlesex Higher Education Committee met representatives of the School Governors and it was agreed that the Governors should put forward definite proposals, certain areas in the North-West of Middlesex being at this time considered as possible areas to which the School might remove. Two days later an officer from the LCC's Education Department approached his opposite number in Middlesex, enquiring whether it was correct that the School Governors were applying for aid to Middlesex for capital or maintenance, pointing out at the same time that the School was not aided by the LCC. The specific questions were not answered by Middlesex, but the LCC was informed that the Governors were exploring the possibility of removal of the School. If the Chairman of the Middlesex Higher Education Committee had already discussed with the School Governors at this early stage the question of a grant from Middlesex, which seems likely, this fact was certainly not disclosed to the LCC, another interested party.

It seems likely that a Middlesex grant was under discussion from the start, because subsequent events made it perfectly clear that the possibility of obtaining a grant was what attracted the School Governors to Middlesex. Hertfordshire had been favourably disposed to receiving the School, but had been unable to make a capital grant towards building costs, whereas Middlesex was prepared to consider making both a capital and a maintenance grant². Anyway, the School Governors decided in November to continue their negotiations with Middlesex Education Committee

1. Reference was made to this capital grant earlier in Chapters 7 and 8, pages 334 and 352, where it was shown how important the grant proved to be to the School on the one hand, and to the Authority on the other.

2. Report on Meeting at Board of Education on 10.12.1930.

and also to seek an interview with the Board of Education. The Board was willing to arrange, in December, a meeting between all the interested parties - the Board, the School Governors, the Middlesex County Council and the LCC - to discuss the School's removal to Middlesex.

Both the Middlesex Education Committee and the School Governors now took preparatory steps for the meeting at the Board. The parties were to be represented not only by their officials but also by councillors or representative governors. The Chairman of the Middlesex Higher Education Committee was briefed by one of his officers: the rapid exodus of population from London to Middlesex brought a growing school population; the proposed area was a very suitable one for School B; the County would consider making a grant towards building costs, sending free place pupils to the new school and making a maintenance grant per Middlesex pupil. So far only informal discussions had been held, but it was the policy of the Middlesex Education Committee

"to give the greatest freedom to their schools and their desire to see in their areas schools of varying types."¹

The Clerk to the School Governors thought it wise to set down, before the Board of Education meeting, what he thought to be the understanding between the Governors and the Middlesex County Council in the event of the School moving to Middlesex. This was much more precise than suggested by the above brief note, so it appears that by this time (November 1930) actual figures had been discussed. The Clerk stated that the Governors understood that²

"Middlesex is prepared to grant... as a contribution to the cost of building the School, free of interest charges, a sum of £25,000, such sum to be secured by a charge on the buildings in such a way that should the School be removed or discontinued, the first charge on the buildings would be the repayment to the Middlesex County Council of this money."

Furthermore, Middlesex would pay the school fees of eighteen guineas per annum for each County scholar and

1. MEC. Office Notes for Chairman of HESC dated 26.11.30.

2. Clerk of Schools Foundation to Secretary, MEC, dated 28.11.30.

"in addition will make a grant to the Foundation of an annual¹ sum in respect of each Middlesex pupil educated at the School¹, amounting to £10 per pupil, less a deduction calculated as the interest on the sum of £25,000 advanced.

"... if the School is built for say 450 pupils and interest is taken on the £25,000 at say 6%, this sum of £1,500 will be deducted from the £10 per pupil, i.e. £4,500, leaving payable to us on the full School £3,000 per annum. That sum on 450 pupils equals £6.13.4. per pupil, and we understand that this sum ... will be paid to the Foundation for each Middlesex pupil actually in the School in any year."

The Clerk ended by saying that the Governors were to keep the School as one recognised by the Board of Education for grant, and to comply with the Board of Education requirements. The Middlesex County Council was to have three representative Governors on the Board. A letter from the Local Authority setting out the Council's terms of assistance would be welcome. The Education Secretary's response was cautious enough to point out that²

"The figures mentioned were, of course, tentative and would be the subject of detailed consideration."

Discussions so far had been informal and

"... decisions of the Committee have not yet been taken. However, in the light of the Committee's action in connection with other schools, ... the suggestion may be taken with assurance that they will receive the Committee's favourable consideration."

The School Governors prepared for the Board of Education meeting a Memorandum³ setting out the financial position of the present School which pointed to the likelihood of a cumulative deficit if the School remained in London; it also gave detailed proposals for the financing of the proposed new School, both on the capital and maintenance accounts. The first set of figures revealed a serious overall decline in number of pupils in the senior school and, given this decline, a rise in the proportion financed by the LCC as against those attending as fee payers:

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1. Presumably for all Middlesex pupils irrespective of whether they were County scholars, financed by other bodies or by their parents.
 2. Secretary, MEC, to Clerk, Schools Foundation, dated 1.12.30.
 3. Foundation Memorandum, 10.12.1930.

TablePupils in Senior School and how Financed

	<u>Number of Pupils</u>	<u>Financed by LCC.</u>	<u>Financed by Foundn.</u>	<u>Fee-Payers</u>
		%	%	%
1910-1911	385	37.0	9	54.0
1924-1925	432	49.2	2	47.0
1930 (Oct)	300	53.3	7	39.3

The actual receipts of the School were shown at £9,299 for 1929-30, whereas by 1932-33 it was estimated that they would fall to £6,665, thus naturally resulting in a much increased deficit. The main cause for this was clearly the expected further fall in pupil numbers, which would result in the three largest sources of receipts dwindling drastically: fees from the LCC and from parents, and grant from the Board of Education. How was the rising deficit to be met? Taking actual figures of endowment income and expenditure in 1929/30 and estimates for the following three years, it was calculated how much endowment income would be available in each year to set against the annually rising deficits. On this basis the Memorandum pointed to an overall deficit for the four years of £758.

The proposals concerning the future new school showed that out of a total estimated capital cost of £55,500, the Middlesex County Council was expected to cover by grant £25,000; the Foundation had £7,000 accumulated income in hand, and expected to raise the remaining £23,500 by sale of its existing premises in London. The maintenance account showed that the endowment income could fairly comfortably cover the first two years estimated deficit of £4,269. These would be financially the most difficult years for a newly established school. Once the school was full, it was expected the deficit would not be more than £900 per annum, on the assumption that fees were £18.18.0 for each pupil, Board of Education grant £8 and LEA grant £6.10.0. An annual deficit of £900 would not present a problem for the Foundation.

Whilst the Memorandum made it clear that 45% of the capital for the new school was to be raised by the County Council, it is not possible to state precisely what proportion of the annual maintenance cost was to be borne by the County once the school was full. It is worthwhile, however, to make certain quite reasonable assumptions, and then to calculate on the given assumptions¹ the extent to which the Governors looked to the County Council for their current annual income. It may be said that, very roughly, 33% of the income towards maintenance was to come from the Middlesex County Council, another 24% from the Board of Education - i.e. a total of 57% from public funds.

1. Such reasonable assumptions might be:

- i) That out of a full school of 450 girls, 400 might be in the senior, 50 in the junior school. Here we are concerned only with the receipts of the senior school. (Actually, in 1949, out of 506 girls 144 were in the junior school).
- ii) That the cost per senior pupil would be £32, the figure given in the Governors' Memorandum. That therefore the total School cost would be 400 x £32, i.e. £12,800.
- iii) That the MCC would take up 25% of the annual intake, i.e. a total of 100 places.
- iv) That the County's grant per Middlesex pupil would be paid on, say, 380 pupils, since it could be assumed that the majority of pupils would come from Middlesex.

It can then be calculated that the total current income would have come from the following sources:

MCC: Fees for 100 pupils at £18.18.0.	£1,890) 33%
Grant for 380 " " £ 6.10.0.	£2,470	
B/E: Grant for 400 " " £ 8. 0.0.	£3,200	24%
Parents and Other Bodies:		
Fees for 300 pupils " £18.18.0.	£5,670	43%
<hr/>		
Total estimated income	£13,230	100%
Less estimated expenditure	£12,800	
<hr/>		
Surplus	£ 430	

As the Governors estimated an annual deficit of £900, their assumptions must clearly have been slightly different. It is interesting how these figures compare with the post-war situation of direct grant schools. In 1963, 32% of total income came from LEAs, 44% from the Ministry - a total of 75% from public funds, compared with 57% according to this calculation.

It was, then, the urgent problem of the School's likely mounting deficit if it remained in London and the proposal to move it to Middlesex which was on the agenda of the Board of Education meeting in December. The Report¹ on this meeting, written by one of the Board's senior civil servants, seen and approved by those present, is of interest in certain respects.

The Clerk to the Governors outlined the plight of the School, in amplification of the Memorandum. Situated in a neighbourhood of increasing industrialisation, the population was declining, and in particular the large householders were moving out, and even smaller ones were buying houses on London's outskirts. Their place was being taken mainly by Jews and poor residents who could not afford the £18.18.0. fee. Only 89 of the 240 pupils in the main school lived in the immediate vicinity of the School; 150 at a distance of 30 minutes journey. Within three years the working deficit would be £830 because certain items of expenditure could not drop proportionately to falling pupil numbers. If numbers continued to fall, they would be unable to support the School. By 1938, the accumulated income of £7,000 would be exhausted, and with it the opportunity to secure an alternative site. The Governors therefore wanted to establish the School as soon as possible in an area to which the original population had emigrated.

There were alternatives. One was to reduce fees to £12.12.0., but the loss of income would be offset only if 95 new pupils were attracted to the School. The other was to apply to the LCC for aid. The Governors had deliberately abstained from this course: the School had a long tradition of independence and financial aid from the LEA would not enable them to carry out in full the original intentions of the founder - to provide education for Church of England pupils.²

1. Report of Meeting held 10.12.1930.

2. It is not clear why financial aid could not be accepted from the LCC but was sought by the Governors from Middlesex. Perhaps the terms on which these two LEAs aided schools were different? Or this argument was used simply to meet LCC objections to removal of the School, which the Governors were determined to undertake anyway, since they did not regard their School as one for Jews and poor girls?

The Secretary of the Middlesex Education Committee made it clear that a decision was urgently required. The population in the area of Middlesex was growing at a startling rate, and the Middlesex Authority had made provision in its own scheme for a school in that area. The Authority, however, was willing to

"alter the character of their proposed school and make a capital grant to the Governors towards the cost of transferring and re-erecting School B..."

In addition, an annual capitation grant-in-aid would be given. He clearly understood that none of this Middlesex expenditure would qualify for grant from the Board, as the School received direct grant from that source. The whole cost would therefore fall on Middlesex ratepayers.

Objection to the School's removal came from the LCC representatives. They spoke in their personal capacity, since the matter had not yet been considered by their Higher Education Committee. As the Foundation had been intended for London children, the LCC might resist removal of the School. Furthermore, the LCC would be faced with the necessity either to build a new school or enlarge an existing County school to accommodate the present 162 County minor scholars at School B. The population exodus was a general problem, and the financial difficulties of the School could be alleviated by aid from the LCC. It was regretted that the Governors were so averse to receiving LCC aid.

The Clerk to the Governors had already pointed out that over half the present pupils came from homes situated close to another secondary school. The District Inspector now added that some concentration of secondary pupils in that part of London was desirable on educational grounds. Pupils from the present three secondary girls' schools - two County and School B - could be compressed into two schools of 450 - 500 pupils, affording a better chance of good classification and satisfactory sixth forms. The HMI also felt, on educational grounds, that some concentration was desirable, whilst the Middlesex Education Officer thought as the LCC gave scholars a wide choice of schools, no difficulty should be experienced in accommodating the County minor scholars.

The LCC Education Officer responded by insisting that the present pupils could not be accommodated without new buildings. The current

programme provided for improvements at one of the County schools, but not for its enlargement. Nor would the LCC's difficulties be met if provision were made in any new Scheme for securing the interests of children of the "privileged class"¹. This last suggestion was put to the LCC Education Officer by the Board of Education's spokesman who chaired the meeting, who also emphasized the urgency of the matter, in view of the Governors' desire to conserve their £7,000 accumulated income for securing a reasonably priced site. He added that if pupil numbers at the present School B continued to decline, this in itself would modify the LCC's attitude in future. The conference agreed that in view of the urgency of the matter, the LCC representatives would raise it at their Higher Education Committee the following day, and would let the Governors know informally the result, so that the Governors could decide whether to press their application for a new scheme or to consider alternatives.

LCC objections carried the day for a time²; in February 1931 the Middlesex Education Department was informed by telephone that the Governors were "beaten at the moment", that the Board of Education would not approve the purchase of land in Middlesex, on which the Governors had already paid a deposit. Would the County Council agree to buy and hold the land for the School?³ Presently the Secretary of the Middlesex Education Committee reported to his Higher Education Committee that the Governors had encountered difficulties, and would the Committee recommend

1. Presumably to puncture any further LCC opposition, just such an amending Scheme was made by the Board of Education in 1934, the year when the Governors' second application for removal of the School to Middlesex was considered. Under it, scholarships awarded by the Foundation to girls of the "privileged class" could be tenable at any school or institution approved by the Governors, and not necessarily at School B only*. The "privileged class" was defined as follows in the School's Rules of Payment dated 1931: "...Girls of the privileged class shall be construed as references to girls who are resident in or whose parents have their occupation in the Ancient Parish of..." *Governors Memorandum, 1934.
2. The School Governors when submitting a new Memo. to the Board of Education in 1934, made it clear that "after conversations with representatives of your Board and the LCC, the Governors agreed to try the effect of a reduction in the school fees.." (letter from Clerk to Board, 27.6.34).
3. Office Memo. on telephone conversation with Clerk, 23.2.31.

purchase of the land in question for educational purposes? In April the Higher Education Committee did so recommend¹ and the matter was then referred to the Sites Committee which put the purchase in the hands of the County Architect and District Valuer.

In June, the Clerk to the School Governors informed the Middlesex Education Officer that the Board of Education had sanctioned a reduction in fees by one third, to £12.12.0. per annum, which would apply to Middlesex scholars. Clearly the Governors had been prevailed upon to try this alternative course to meet the School's financial difficulties. But it was only a matter of time before the Governors achieved their objective. Contact with the Middlesex Education Committee was maintained - when in June 1934 a house in a Middlesex Suburb was up for sale, the County Architect enquired whether the Education Committee was interested, and the Secretary of the Education Committee in turn asked the Clerk to the Governors whether he thought it worth considering for the School B proposal².

During the second round of negotiations, there was apparently no round-table-conference at the Board of Education among all the interested parties to discuss the removal of the School. Only in May 1936 did the Board of Education, the School Governors and the LCC representatives meet to discuss the School's removal and the value of the London site. Meanwhile, Middlesex County Council had already a year earlier approved the terms on which assistance would be given to the new School, and the Board of Education had three months earlier approved the building plans. So much for the position of the LCC at this second stage.

In July 1934 the Governors at one of their meetings passed this Resolution, which was then sent to the Board of Education³:

"... as the present School maintained by the Governors ... cannot be usefully and economically carried on except in so far as it may be necessary to do so until proper arrangements shall have been made for the education of the pupils now attending the School, the School ... should be closed at a convenient date and the buildings and grounds disposed of and that a new School to be

1. HESC/67/1.4.31, pp. 86 & 89.

2. Communications: County Architect to MEC, 20.6.34, and MEC to Clerk, dated 25.6.34.

3. Clerk to Governors Communication to Board of Education, 17.7.34.

maintained by the Foundation ... of such a size and in such a position as shall be approved by the Governors should be established in the County of Middlesex and that application be made forthwith to the Board of Education for such sanctions as shall be necessary to enable the Governors to put into practice the terms of this resolution, including if necessary a Scheme to be made by the Board of Education under the Charitable Trusts Acts 1853-1925 for the alterations of the Schemes regulating the ... Schools Foundation."

Shortly before this resolution was submitted, the Clerk to the Governors had already written to the Board of Education, drawing attention to a Memorandum presented by a Special Sub-Committee to the Governors, which caused the latter to be seriously alarmed at the continued decline in pupil numbers and in income. The experiment of making the School financially viable by reducing the fees had failed.

This Memorandum¹ summarised in some detail the sequence of events in 1930-31 when, they thought, the Board of Education had been favourably disposed to the Governors' proposed move of the School to Middlesex. The document reiterated the Governors' determination not to accept a deficiency grant from the LCC and added that the age and unsuitability of the old buildings even made it unlikely that such a grant would be forthcoming. Furthermore, since the last round of negotiations, the nearest County secondary school for girls had been condemned by the LEA, and the Governors felt that a suitable and adequate modern secondary school could be established on the present London site of School B, to cater for the two schools' pupil roll which together now stood at only 465.

Figures of pupil numbers, income and costs completely vindicated the Governors' gloomy forebodings of four years earlier: School B now had only 260 pupils (300 in 1930), of which 210 were in the senior school. A further drop of 25 was estimated for 1935. Consequently the cost per pupil which had been £28 in 1924, £37 in 1931 and £35.13.8. in 1934, would in 1935 rise to £43.8.8., of which the Foundation would have to meet £22.9.5., against a mere £6 back in 1924. Had it not been for the Government economy campaign which had cut teachers' salaries for the

1. Memo enclosed with letter from Clerk to Governors to Board of Education, 27.6.34.

three years 1932-34 by 10%, the reduction in fees which had been adopted experimentally in 1932 would have been completely disastrous for the Foundation's finances.

There had also been the problem that girls of the "privileged class" would not be able to attend a school in Middlesex. This had now been dealt with by an Amending Scheme which the Board had made in response to the Governors application. It enabled the Governors to grant scholarships to girls of the "privileged class" at other schools or institutions.

The Memorandum concluded that the proposed area in Middlesex needed secondary school accommodation for girls and that the Middlesex Education Committee would welcome the school in this district. The Governors were satisfied that the Foundation was financially in a position to erect, furnish and maintain a three-form-entry school without disposing of any of the capital endowments of the Foundation, other than the site and buildings in London.

The Board of Education now pointed out to the Foundation that the written consent of the Board would be required under the Endowed Schools Act 1869, Section 55, to build new premises, and before giving this, preliminary details of proposals, including the proposed site and provision of funds, would be required. At the same time the Board invited the Middlesex LEA to state whether they would support the Governors' proposal, and to submit relevant information on site and finance¹.

In view of the Board's generally favourable response, it now rested upon the Governors and the County Council to work out the details for the School's removal to Middlesex. Early in August 1934 when the Clerk to the Governors called at the Middlesex Education Committee Office, the following points were raised: the Governors had appointed a Special Sub-Committee with powers to act; they would look for a site in Middlesex of approximately twelve acres; would seek an interview to discuss a temporary loan until the London site was sold. For this site they hoped to get £15,000; the new site and school they hoped to acquire and build

1. Board of Education to Clerk of Governors, 1.8.34.
Board of Education to Middlesex LEA, 1.8.34.

for approximately £50,000; and they would look to Middlesex for a maintenance grant of £6 per annum for each Middlesex pupil¹.

On two of these points a change of attitude occurred within the next few months and from the records it is not possible to say exactly why this happened. The area originally proposed was abandoned in favour of another one in Middlesex, may be because a suitable site was in the offing there. And an assurance was sought and given that no maintenance grant would be required by the Governors from the Middlesex County Council. In November, the Secretary of the Education Committee sent to the Clerk to the Governors plans drawn up by the County Architect of a possible lay-out of sites, buildings etc. of two secondary schools, the proposed new School A for boys² and the proposed new School B for girls. It so happened that School A for boys, also an old Foundation School for which the Middlesex County Council was at this time Trustee, owned land sufficient for two secondary schools, and the question of selling part of this site to the Foundation of School B for the erection of a new school came under discussion. The site was a large one available for educational purposes, and certain other parts of it were already in use for the Old Boys' playing fields, and for an elementary school maintained by the Borough. By selling part of the site to the Governors of School B, the Foundation of School A was able to improve its own financial position.³

The Foundation of School B now put pen to paper, and produced what was to prove only a first draft of the proposed conditions on which School B was to be established in Middlesex. This was in December.

1. Handwritten office note dated 8.8.34.
2. County Architect to Secretary of MEC, 9.10.34 and 20.11.34. Secretary, MEC, to Clerk to Governors, 21.11.34.
3. The story of School A is not directly relevant to this chapter, but a short account of its financial position may be found in Chapter 7(d). It illustrates in yet another way how a school which was in financial difficulties improved its position at public expense and was, as a consequence, able to regain a greater degree of independence at a later date. It is also of interest to remember that School A and its Old Boys were the nucleus of resistance to comprehensive school plans in the late 1940s and again in the present period (1966).

In January 1935 the letter¹ of the Clerk to the Governors was reproduced in full for consideration by the Higher Education Committee². A Sub-Committee was appointed to meet the Governors' representatives to discuss the details, and as a result of this meeting together with a further consultation at officer level, a new draft was sent by the Clerk to the Secretary of the Middlesex Education Committee³. This second draft was now circulated to Senior County Officers for their comments⁴. The County Solicitor submitted to the Education Office radical amendments to the letter on three of the proposed conditions, which were then passed back to the School Governors. By the end of April the Secretary of the Education Committee received the third draft letter from the Clerk to the Governors setting out the conditions for the School's removal, which incorporated all the changes proposed by the County Solicitor⁵. It was these amended conditions which were in turn accepted by the Higher Education Sub-Committee and the Education Committee of the County Council in May 1935. The Board of Education Order ultimately authorising the Governors of School B to accept a grant from the Middlesex County Council for the balance of the cost of the new School over and above £26,150 was sealed only in January 1937⁶.

The various stages of this second round of negotiations have been set down in the above paragraph in order that attention can now be focussed on the points of substance arising at each stage. The School Governors declared themselves willing to build, equip and maintain a three-form-entry girls' school in Middlesex and to provide a proportion of places for Middlesex assisted scholars on the following conditions:-

First draft dated 5.12.1934:

- a) The Governors of School A agree to sell freehold not less than 20 acres to the Governors of School B.
- b) The Foundation of School B would contribute £26,000 (the sum required for a two-form-entry school) towards the erection of the new School.

1. Clerk to Secretary of MEC, 5.12.34.
 2. Meeting on 2.1.35.
 3. Clerk to Secretary of MEC, 28.3.35.
 4. County Architect, Solicitor, Valuation Officer and Accountant.
 5. County Solicitor to Secretary MEC, 10.4.35; Secretary MEC to Clerk to Governors, 15.4.35; Clerk to Secretary MEC, 29.4.35.
 6. Order of Board of Education sealed 26.1.37. No.37/545. Administrative County: London.

- c) Middlesex County Council would provide the balance "including cost of land, building, equipment, furnishing and laying out of grounds without any obligation upon the Schools Foundation to repay any part of such sum so provided by the Middlesex County Council."
- d) If the Governors were unable to dispose of their London site in time (because of LCC needs for secondary education) to raise their £26,000, then Middlesex County Council would lend a sum not exceeding £16,000 at not more than $3\frac{1}{2}\%$ for a period not exceeding five years.
- e) Building plans were to be passed by the Governors, who would invite the County Architect to cooperate with their Architect.
- f) Tenders were to be a matter for the Governors alone, who would consider carefully any advice from the Middlesex County Council.
- g) It was hoped the School would open in September 1936.
- h) The School was to be direct grant aided.
- i) The Governors were not to be compelled to offer more than 25% of their annual places to Middlesex assisted pupils.
- j) A fee of £15.15.0. per annum might be charged.
- k) Middlesex County Council was to appoint four Governors.

The Governors added that the suggested lay-out of land on the site "would not commend itself" to the Governors because the area allocated to School B was "too irregular in shape" and "situated too close to the playground of the elementary school..."

On 17.1.35, the Chairman and three other members of the Middlesex Education Committee met two of the School Governors. The officials and Architects of both parties were also present. It was at this meeting that one of the County Councillors asked for an assurance from the Foundation that their endowments would suffice to maintain a three-form-entry school without assistance from Middlesex County Council. This assurance was given, and this was the first important respect in which this second round of negotiations was conducted on a different basis from the first, when all the School's calculations were based on the assumption of a maintenance grant per Middlesex pupil in the new School. It would seem that this was a change of attitude on the part of the

County Council representatives, since the Clerk to the Governors a few months earlier had still assumed that a maintenance grant would be made as well as the capital grant.

The first draft was considered, and the Middlesex County Council representatives agreed to recommend to the County Council that it should provide capital required in excess of £26,000 - thus accepting condition b). There was some discussion about the lay-out of the site. The Governors preferred the site furthest away from the elementary school, and it was a question whether School A would accept this solution. One of the Councillors thought that the ultimate decision would rest with the Middlesex County Council, and "in view of the strong arguments supporting the claim of ...School B to be further from the elementary school and nearer to the railway station, the probability was that any objections from ...School A governors would be over-ruled."¹ This aversion of the Governors of School B to place their School adjacent to the elementary school has been dwelt on because it appears to reveal a snobbish attitude. The documentation gives no other convincing reason against the common frontier. One of the two new schools had to share a boundary with the elementary school - in the end it was the boys' school which did so. This attitude to the elementary school crops up again in a much more serious context later, when School B went independent because its Governors were not prepared to accept a higher proportion than 25% of their annual entry from candidates who had the two year elementary (after 1944 'primary') school attendance qualification. Ostensibly this was because the standard of the elementary school candidates was lower than that of children from the School's own preparatory department, but the student of the documentation is bound to express doubts on this score.

On 28.3.35. the second draft was submitted by the Clerk to the Governors. Much in it was the same as in the first draft. Point a) now specified a freehold site of not less than 18 acres, preferably the

1. Report on Meeting held 17.1.35. between representatives of MEC and School Governors.

one furthest removed from the elementary school. The capital grant under point c) from the Middlesex County Council, was to be provided "without any obligation .. so long as a secondary school is maintained upon the site to repay any part of such sum..". The £16,000 loan - point d) - was to be given on the security of the London site. Points e) and f) which had given the Governors' sole control over the passing of building plans and acceptance of tenders were omitted. Thus both in respect of how the money granted was to be spent and of the conditions under which it would be repayable, the County Council was in this second draft accorded certain rights specifically excluded or omitted in the Governors' first draft. Regarding point i), it was specified that the 25% free places for Middlesex scholars were to fall within the meaning of Article 15 of the Board of Education Grant Regulations.

The third draft was dated 29.4.35. This was the one which the Education Committee accepted as the basis for the capital grant. It will be recollected that the County Solicitor inserted considerable changes - which safeguarded the County Council's interests. Points b), c) and d) now read as proposed by the County Solicitor; otherwise the third draft remained the same as before:

- b) The Governors of the Schools Foundation were to contribute towards the acquisition of the site, compensation to tenants, legal costs of School A Foundation, erection of the new School, its equipment and furniture, £26,000.
- c) Of this £26,000, the Governors shall pay on completion of the purchase of the site such amount not being less than £7,000, as will cover the purchase money and tenants' compensation and the costs of the Foundation of School A and that the residue shall, if the Governors so request, be advanced by the Middlesex County Council as and when the new buildings progress on the understanding that the repayment of this sum within a period of five years together with interest at $3\frac{1}{2}\%$ shall be a charge on the property of the Foundation of School B including the new site, subject of course to the necessary Order of the Board of Education. The reason for this request is that the Foundation may not be in a position to find this balance pending the sale of their existing School premises in London.

- d) That the Middlesex County Council shall provide such amount as may be necessary to meet the difference between £26,000 and the total cost of site, erection and equipment of the School, provision of furniture and laying out grounds, subject to approval by the Council of plans, specification and details of tenders to be accepted.

If the property shall be sold by the Governors or if the

"School for any other reason over which the Governors have control ceases to be a public secondary school carried on in accordance with the conditions under which the Board of Education recognise secondary schools for the purposes of a grant (or in the event of the Governors agreeing to accept grant from the Middlesex County Council, the conditions under which the County Council give financial aid to secondary schools..) then the sum so provided by the County Council less an amount by way of depreciation, which shall be calculated at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ on the sum so provided by the County Council for each year during which the school has been maintained as a public secondary school, shall become repayable by the ... Foundation."

There is no special significance regarding the changes made in point b). By this later date, the various items of expenditure involved in securing the site for the new School were more precisely known and were included in the new draft. Point c) and d) however were now reversed. The security which the Governors were to give for any loan from the County Council, to enable the Governors to meet their financial commitments until the London site could be sold, was increased to include also the new site. Finally, the conditions under which the Governors became liable to repay the County Council's grant were elaborated. Repayment would be due in the event of the School ceasing to be a public secondary school recognised for grant by the Board of Education or receiving grant from the County Council, i.e. if the School became independent. In determining the amount of repayment the depreciation of the property was explicitly allowed for by the County Solicitor at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ per annum for every year that the School had been a public secondary school. Thus the School Governors would have been committed to pay back a lesser monetary sum than was given as capital grant, had the condition about repayment been left unaltered. This would no doubt have been a welcome thought ten years later when property values had risen considerably, and

when the School Governors decided to go independent.

But the Board of Education in this respect saved the day in protecting the County Council's interest against loss due to inflation. The final Authority to accept Grant subject to Repayment in certain events¹ specified that repayment was to be at current valuation. The available documentation does not explain why this was done - possibly the Board of Education's legal advisers simply inserted a standard clause which covered both the possibility of depreciation and appreciation. The Order defined the "agreed condition" as follows²:

"... if the said School ceases to be a Public Secondary School carried on in accordance with the conditions from time to time in force under which:-

- (a) The Board of Education recognise Secondary Schools for the purposes of payment of grant; or
- (b) The Council give financial aid to Secondary Schools in the County of Middlesex;

the Governors will repay to the Council a sum bearing the same proportion to the value, at the time of such event arising, of the site, buildings, works, property or equipment in respect of which the Council's grant was made as to the amount of the Council's grant bore to the total original expenditure on such site, buildings, works, property or equipment, such value to be determined in case of difference by the arbitration of a Surveyor to be appointed by the President of the Chartered Surveyors' Institution, and the sum so payable will until payment be charged upon the premises of the said school."

"Provided that any sum which becomes payable by the Governors as aforesaid will be so payable only out of the endowment of the Foundation, as in this Order provided."

However, a further Order of the Board would be required³ to enable the Foundation to raise by "sale or otherwise out of the endowment of the Foundation.." the amount due for repayment.

It is one of the ironies of this case study that the Board of Education Order contained the above quoted protective clause, inserted presumably by the Board's officials, and yet that the Ministry of Education, the Board's successor, endeavoured after 1945, when the School became

1. Order of Board of Education sealed 26.1.37.

2. Ibid, point 2.

3. Ibid, point 3.

independent, to prevail upon the County Council to waive its claim for repayment arguing, even, that the claim was not necessarily valid. However, this matter is related a little later.

Whilst the by now familiar "condition" on which capital grant was to be given was being formulated, other matters were also receiving attention. Most important was that the Board of Education enquired from the Middlesex Education Secretary how the transfer of School B would affect the existing County Secondary Schools in that part of the County¹. Here again the Board of Education was ensuring that the interests of the LEA as provider of the maintained schools were not overlooked. A meeting on this matter was proposed by the Board, and although no record of one exists in the files, the Middlesex Education Office prepared a set of figures, probably for use at such a meeting, which showed the rising population in the area concerned, the number of secondary school places in four existing schools (2 mixed, one girls', one boys') and how the expansion of School A on the new site and the erection of School B would affect the position. Instead of 13.2 places per 1,000² (7 and 6.2 for boys and girls respectively), new provision in the two schools would raise the figure to 17.1 places per 1,000 (7.9 and 9.2 for boys and girls respectively).

Then there were all the exchanges concerning the sale of land for the new School B. The Finance Committee was alerted by the Secretary of the Education Committee (through the Clerk to the County Council) to the need to approve the sale of land by the Foundation of School A; the local Borough Education Officer was kept informed and asked to secure the reactions of the Governors of School A regarding the sale of land; these Governors, as a matter of fact, complained both to the Education Committee and to the Board of Education that the price of £6,850 for 18 acres proposed by the County Valuation Officer was far too low. They wanted £800 per acre, which would have meant a price of £14,400 - over

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1. Board of Education to Middlesex Education Office. Record of telephone call dated 24.7.35.
 2. It is not clear from the undated office note whether this is per 1,000 of the population or per what?

twice as much! The Board of Education consequently insisted on an independent valuation, and eventually persuaded the Governors of School A to accept the figure of £7,000 which was recommended as a fair price.

In July 1936 the contract for sale of land was exchanged, by which time the plans for the new School B to be erected on the site had long since been approved, both by the Middlesex Education Committee¹ and by the Board of Education². Even the tender for building the School was approved by the Board³ at a total of £38,697, before the exchange of contract for sale of the site.

The Headmistress of School B took up contact with the Middlesex Education Office and expressed the desire to visit some Middlesex schools so that she would be of greater use to her Governors on the many problems of the removal⁴. Later the Secretary of the Education Committee submitted a draft list of furniture for the School, with prices, totalling £3,112⁵.

By April 1935 one of the local papers reported the news that the new School was to be built⁶, and when it was realised that the new buildings would not be ready for the 1936-37 school year, the School Governors, the Middlesex Education Committee and the Board of Education were in touch with each other, and for one year the School was established in temporary premises. Apparently there were many demands for places⁷.

This completes the account of the negotiations and the terms on which this direct grant school moved to Middlesex. One aspect has still to be recorded: the total amount of the County Council's capital grant. The agreement provided that the County Council would pay the balance, over £26,000, for which the Foundation accepted responsibility. Although

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1. Education Committee Meeting, 30.9.35.
 2. Board of Education to Clerk to Governors dated 17.2.36.
 3. Ibid, 10.6.36.
 4. Letter from Headmistress to Secretary, MEC, dated 11.1.35.
 5. Letter from Secretary, MEC, to Headmistress, dated 7.10.35. It is likely that this £3,112 for furniture was paid by the County Council over and above the capital grant towards building the new school.
 6. Thames Valley Times, 10.4.35.
 7. Surrey Comet, 29.4.36.

estimates and tenders were available, the ultimate total cost of the new School only became known as the building work was well advanced. In April 1937, the Education Secretary informed the Clerk of the County Council¹ that the Governors had requested that the capital grant from the Middlesex County Council be increased. In 1935 the County Council had authorised £20,850, whereas it was now clear that some £30,000 would in fact be needed. He added that the expenditure incurred by the Governors on their new school was approximately the same as what it would have cost the County Council to provide its own School.

Shortly afterwards, the Clerk of the County Council, the Secretary of the Education Committee and the County Architect submitted a joint Report to the Higher Education Sub-Committee². This set out the following facts: Originally it had been estimated that the School would cost £40,000 and the land £6,850. The land was in fact purchased for £7,000, and the contract signed with the builder was for £38,697. The Foundation had made payments and their balance was now almost exhausted. On inspecting the work, the County Architect had found some extra work was being undertaken. It had been pointed out that if the cost of the School exceeded the estimated figure, the Foundation might have to bear this extra cost, but the Foundation had said they had no further funds. Their new detailed estimates which were then requested showed the total costs might be almost £55,000.

As the County Council had agreed to pay the difference between the £26,000 to be raised by the Foundation and the total cost of the School, the Report concluded that the County Council would have to meet approximately an additional £10,000. It was added, however, that the County Council would accept no liability for expenditure by reason of variations in contract figures exceeding this further £10,000, unless the County Council had first approved such variation. Evidently, then, the variations which had already been accepted by the Governors - since the County Architect found certain extra work being done - were presented to the

1. Secretary, MEC, to Clerk of MCC, dated 27.4.37.

2. Report to HESC dated 4.5.37.

County Council as a fait accompli, the cost of which the LEA now agreed to meet. This was contrary to point d) of the agreed condition¹, according to which the County Council had to approve expenditure before footing the bill.

In May 1937 first the Education Committee and then the County Council approved the additional grant of £10,000 to the Foundation.

1. See page 431.

(b) Repayment of Capital Grant after the War

On 1st April, 1945, fees were abolished in the maintained secondary schools, but not in the direct grant schools. This fact was not unconnected with the decision of the Governors of School B to take their School into the independent sector, as a result of which repayment of the capital grant became due to the County Council, although suitable noises were made both by the Governors and the Ministry in the hope that the County Council would waive the claim.

The retention of fees in the direct grant schools had been accepted with reluctance by many in Parliament, and Mr. Butler, President of the Board of Education, had given an assurance that parental ability to pay would not suffice to gain admission, nor would inability to do so exclude a child. All this was to be ensured through new Regulations under the Act. Clearly these Regulations had to deal with the procedure for admission of pupils to the direct grant schools. There were to be free, reserved and residuary places¹.

Thus the schools in receipt of direct grant were not wholly their own masters in the selection of their pupils. Not that this was a completely new-fangled idea. Under the pre-war Secondary Schools Regulations it had been stipulated that 25% of the annual entry of pupils had to consist of candidates who had been for at least two years immediately before in an elementary school, and that these pupils had to be awarded free places².

Under the agreement which the Governors of School B had negotiated with the Middlesex County Council³ they were not to be compelled to provide more than 25% of the annual entry as free places for Middlesex

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1. The new procedure under the 1944 Act and new Regulations are set out in detail in Chapter 2(d).
 2. S.R. & O. 1935, No. 679, 17.7.35. Article 15(c) and (d). It is true that under Article 15(c) it was possible for the Board of Education to accept some other proportion than 25% for a particular school.
 3. As set out in letter dated 28.3.35, which was discussed on page 430 - point i) in the second draft.

scholars. The Order of the Board, on the other hand, which authorised the County Council's capital grant for the building of the School, laid an obligation upon the Governors to conduct the School in accordance with the "conditions from time to time in force¹ under which .. the Board of Education recognize Secondary Schools for the purposes of payment of grant..."

Times had changed and the conditions concerning entry of pupils to direct grant schools after the 1944 Act were such that

"The Governors were fearful of the effect of the new regulations for direct grant schools upon the quality of the material coming into the school..."²

The Governors must have been watching apprehensively the effect of the new Education Act on the Direct Grant Schools. They asserted, that Section 44(a)(i) of the Primary and Secondary Schools (Grant Conditions) Draft Regulations was in conflict with the 1944 Act, and in particular with Section 76, that children be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents. Section 44(a)(i) insisted that the 25% free places be awarded to candidates with a two-year primary school qualification. Indeed, the Clerk to the Governors had raised this matter with the Ministry about the time when the Education Bill was reaching the Statute Book, but the Ministry had chosen to be silent on the point when replying³. The School Governors now appealed to the LEA to take up the cudgels on behalf of the School in Ministry quarters.

The new Regulations were to apply to the September 1945 intake into the schools. Selection for this intake occurred during the spring and the School Governors lost no time in raising their fears with the Middlesex Education Office, and to enquire whether the capital grant would have to be refunded if the School went independent. A meeting was held between the CEO and the Governors of which the record contains two accounts, one in an office report, the other in a letter from the

1. Present author's italics.

2. Office Report dated 30.5.45. of Meeting between Officials of MEC and representatives of the Governors, the Clerk to the Governors and the Headmistress.

3. Clerk to Governors to CEO, 1.6.45. This communication refers to a letter from the Ministry to the Clerk dated 21.8.44, less than 3 weeks after the Royal Assent was given to the Education Bill. The Governors lost no time in pressing their objections about conditions of entry on the Ministry.

Clerk to the Governors. The Office Report¹ stated that the Governors had it in mind to intimate to the Minister their intention to cease as a direct grant school at the end of the educational year. Would Middlesex County Council require repayment of the capital grant? The Governors' financial resources sufficed to conduct the School as an independent school provided fees were increased to £12 per term². If refund of the capital grant were required, fees would have to rise more. The Governors had found 48% of the parents of present pupils favoured independent status, 37% direct grant. All parents had been circulated. The Governors' fear was that

"If they were a direct grant school 25% of the admissions would have to be free places allotted to pupils who had been in a primary school. The LEA would have the right to reserve a further 25% of the places for their own pupils. The provisos (i) and (ii) to Article 44(a) of the Draft Regulations might mean that preference in admission would be given to candidates who were likely to profit less by the education in the school than candidates for admission to the residuary places. This year it was stated some candidates were being admitted to free places who were lower on the examination list than fee-paying candidates."

The County Council's Officers stated that

"... this was contrary to the general experience which showed that normally free place candidates were of higher academic promise than the majority of fee-paying candidates."

The Officers also said that refund of the capital grant would be a matter for the County Council and could not be answered by the Officers. A meeting was therefore planned for June at which the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee would meet the Governors.

By letter, the CEO confirmed that the previous Grant Regulations - Article 15(d) - applicable up to 1st April 1945, laid it down as a condition of direct grant that free places to the prescribed minimum number must be awarded to ex-public elementary school pupils. Evidently the CEO wanted to stress that in this respect no change had occurred. Perhaps he wondered what all the fuss was about. It was this letter

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1. Meeting held 30.5.45. between Officials of MEC and Governors.
 2. i.e. £36 per year. In 1942 fees had risen to £25.5.0. per year.
 3. CEO to Clerk to Governors dated 30.5.45.

which evoked the Clerk to place on record the views of the Governors, which gave an account of what he thought had transpired at the meeting¹. He did not think the CEO's point about the old Regulations was of much practical significance in the changed conditions. Under the Education Act, 1944, Section 8(1)(b), an LEA

"... has to have a regard ... for all pupils requiring secondary education within its area and is not limited to those within a certain type of school, nor should School B be so fettered.

" In an examination open to all, it is wrong to tell a child that he or she has failed when in fact he or she has passed. ... Now that I have had more time, they (the current examination results) bring out that if there is to be equal opportunity for all candidates, less than 25% of the passes come from the elementary schools and over 75% from outside. The Primary and Secondary Schools (Grant Conditions) Draft Regulations Section 44(a)(i) would not be needed to give a candidate preference, if he or she could compete on level terms of suitability with the rest.

" After being told that his child has passed, I cannot see how a parent in view of Section 76 of the Act can be prevented by the Ministry or a LEA from requiring his child to be educated in accordance with his wishes at School B. I believe that in this way the Draft Regulations .. conflict with the Act. I raised this point in correspondence with ... the Ministry of Education, but he (Mr.W) did not deal with it in his letter of the 21st Aug.1944, nor have I heard from him since. Now that actual cases have arisen, and more are expected year by year, would you see what you can do with the Ministry?"

Whilst not wishing to recapitulate the rest of the opinions put forward at the interview, the Clerk concluded

".. by expressing the hope that the Middlesex County Council in view of its general responsibility for secondary education for all pupils within its area will not call in the loan, which would only result in adding 21/- or more a term to the tuition fee to the disadvantage of the poorer parent."

When the next meeting occurred soon afterwards, it became clear that the Governors were

".. willing to take in 25% but not necessarily from public elementary schools as they had not been sufficiently good in entrance tests. If as a Direct Grant School they would be forced to take 25% whatever their standard, they would prefer to be an independent school in order to choose what they wanted." ²

1. Clerk to CEO dated 1.6.45.

2. Office notes of Meeting on 18.6.45. between Chairman and Vice-Chairman of MEC and Governors of School B.

The Office Report on the meeting continued

"If they are an independent school they would like us to make an arrangement (flexible) for necessary ____* Free Places, but we could not agree to that." (*No figure was given in this part of the Report).

One of the Governors asked

"Would we take up to 25% if it were an independent school?"

The CEO replied that the Committee had never yet considered this. In conclusion

"It was thought best to have a Governors' meeting and again consult us after the Governors had come to a decision on certain points. In meantime Governors might make a provisional application to be independent."

These two meetings in May and June 1945 very clearly illustrated that the School Governors wanted to have their cake and eat it! The Governors wanted independent control of pupil entry to their school in order to keep a high standard; they resisted having to give preference in admission to children from the maintained primary schools, for fear that this would lower the school's standards. At the same time they wanted the Local Authority to be responsible for the fees of 25% of their entrants, even though the School would have the last say how many of these entrants were drawn from the Authority's own schools. It amounted to defending the right of parents to have their children educated as fee-payers in preparatory schools - presumably because the state primary schools were not good enough - and then securing their child a free place financed by the Authority at a fee-paying secondary school (incidentally, often the same school). Thus the child could be educated in the private sector throughout its school life, but - with luck and some ability on the part of the child - the cost would be borne by the state at the secondary stage, which of course is the more expensive part of a child's education.

From the School's point of view, of course, entry was to depend solely on merit, which was assessed by the School's own entrance examination. The question of the standard of entry as measured by the examinations of the School on the one hand and of the LEA on the other came under discussion later. In this process there were obviously

certain misunderstandings between the parties involved (Clerk to Governors, LEA officers, Ministry officials). The exchanges in due course became a source of irritation to some participants. More of this shortly.

The Clerk had meanwhile notified the Ministry of Education that the Governors had resolved to cease being recognised as a direct grant school and to apply for the capitation grant under Regulation 56 of the Primary and Secondary Schools (Grant Conditions) Regulations 1945¹. When the Ministry of Education asked for the LEA's observations on this resolution², the CEO replied that the matter would be put to the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, and at the same time drew attention to the capital grants made in 1935 and 1937³.

It is of some interest that the whole question of the capital grant must have been raised by the School Governors with the Ministry at an earlier stage, preceeding the negotiations between Governors and LEA related above. A handwritten note⁴ among the documents examined at the DES branch dealing with the registration of educational charities states:

"The Middlesex LEA gave £30,563-5.2 (out of £56,713.5.2.), the last payment being made in 1939... Under the Order of 26.1.37... which was sealed in the 'Middlesex form' they could reclaim 54% of the present value of the premises* in respect of which grant was given. This does not give us a ready figure, but perhaps it is worth adding that if the Order had been in the most common 'London' form with depreciation at 2% per annum the sum repayable at present would be roughly £24,500."
(* present author's italics).

The last mentioned figure took account of depreciation at 2% per annum for the years that the School had been a direct grant school, but it ignored the earlier part of the note, namely that Middlesex County Council could reclaim 54% of the present value of the school premises.

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1. Clerk to the Governors to Ministry of Education dated 22.6.45. Regulation 56 provided for a tapering capitation grant over three years for schools deciding on independent status. This covered pupils in the school who had entered it in earlier years whilst the school was still direct grant.
 2. Ministry of Education to CEO dated 17.7.45.
 3. CEO to Ministry of Education dated 26.7.45.
 4. Register of Educational Charities, File for School B. Note dated 4.2.45.

In October the Secondary Education Sub-Committee¹ considered the £30,850 capital grant and its repayment, and decided to defer a decision pending receipt of a communication from the Ministry of Education. It seems that the Ministry endeavoured to persuade the School Governors to remain a direct grant school, and probably to this end suggested that the two parties get together to discover the cause of the apparently diverging standards in the School's entrance examination and the Authority's eleven plus examination. This at least was how the Clerk to the Governors understood the Ministry's suggestion. The CEO, on the other hand, was under the impression that the proposed meeting was intended to work out a mutually acceptable selection procedure for admission of pupils to School B, on the assumption that the School would remain a direct grant school.

It was the Clerk who, in November, approached the CEO asking that they meet with the Headmistress to see why the entrance examination results of the County Council's candidates for admission are often of a lower standard than that reached by the rest; also why some of the School's candidates in the County Council's examination achieved a lower standard than expected. He enquired whether the two sets of examination questions and marks for each candidate (35 on the County Council list and 24 on the School's list) might be compared².

A marginal comment on this letter states

"No, what I arranged to discuss was what method of selection would be mutually agreeable provided they still wished to remain direct grant."

The Officer's first reply merely stated that the relative marks obtained by pupils was only one aspect of the broader issue of their admission to School B³. The Clerk responded that it would be improper for him and the Headmistress to go into these wider issues, since they had been discussed at the earlier interviews, at the last of which both Chairmen had been present⁴.

1. SESC, 3.10.45.

2. Clerk to Governors to CEO dated 2.11.45.

3. CEO to Clerk to Governors dated 6.11.45.

4. Clerk to Governors to CEO dated 8.11.45.

"It is open to the County to put forward whomever it pleases for the entrance exam to the school, but in the words of the ... Schools Regulations, the minimum standard qualifying for admission, namely passing that entrance exam, is required of every candidate, wherever she comes from."

It was the Ministry of Education, not he, who had asked what was the difference in standards, "a question of facts...":

"If you are disinclined to disclose yours (exam questions and marks), no comparison with the School's is practical, but by a careful enquiry in the course of which I have examined at length the late Head Mistress..., I have obtained enough material upon which to reply to the Ministry, so that disclosure is not essential for my purpose."

Now the CEO replied in greater detail¹:

"... I ought to make it clear that when ... the Ministry of Education telephoned me on 31st October I understood that the suggested meeting was to enable us to discuss a method for entry to School B which would be mutually agreeable to your Governors and the County Council. In the event of the School continuing to receive direct grant, such an understanding would be essential to the implementing of Section 44 of the Primary and Secondary Schools Regulations, 1945."²

The CEO added that although question papers and examination marks were not available to the public, the Committee was not in any way disinclined to disclose these details, in confidence, to Heads of secondary or contributory schools. It was the Committee's instruction that a set of question papers be sent to each school head submitting candidates immediately after the examination. School B should have had a set of such papers last March, and two sets were now sent.

In his reply the Clerk was most ~~irate~~ate that the Headmistress of his School had not received the exam questions in March and wondered why the Committee's instruction had not been carried out in her case. It was

"manifestly unfair that other schools should be given such an advantage that it does not possess."³

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1. CEO to Clerk to Governors dated 10.11.45.
 2. The CEO's letter seems to imply that the CC had to agree the selection procedure if the School remained direct grant. Presumably this is the case only if the 25% free places are taken up and paid by the CC (and, if the Authority wants, also the 25% reserved places). It is open to Governors to offer free places direct to parents of children who have the 2-year primary school qualification, in which case they would control selection, but also have to pay the fees!
 3. Clerk to Governors to CEO, 22.11.45.

In the same letter he protested against another practice of the Local Education Officer. It concerned the letter sent to unsuccessful candidates in the Authority's own examination for entry to grammar schools. This stated

"The pupil's aptitudes and attainments as shown in his/her school record and in the results of the exam held this year indicate that he/she appears to be more suitable for a non-academic course..."

Whilst the Authority could say what it liked about the results of its examinations

"though different views may be taken about them, it cannot be entitled to speak on the school record without the authority of the School concerned."

In some cases where this objectionable letter had been sent the school record showed that

"the candidates were definitely suitable for a grammar school education. In such circumstances the parents have been informed that the reference in this letter to school record is not correct. Since this is liable to cast doubt in the parent's mind about the rest, I am sure that the Middlesex Education Committee will not wish to raise controversy of this nature and I shall be glad if the form of the letter could be amended."

Although this protest was passed on to the Local Education Officer, there is no indication in the records of his views.

Exchanges about entry of Middlesex sponsored pupils continued into 1946, when tempers appeared restored. In March the Clerk enquired¹

"Can it be agreed that a girl, who passes the Council's and School B's exams, will have as much assistance towards her fees there, as if she had gone to one of the Council's schools?"

A marginal comment made in the Middlesex Education Office states "No". The Clerk added that the Foundation would favourably consider the application for assistance of any candidate who had not satisfied the Council's requirements under exceptional circumstances, but who had passed the School's entrance exam and was unable to pay the full fees.

Despite the emphatic marginal "No", the CEO said he found it "difficult" to answer this enquiry as at that date the Education Committee had not been formally advised what the School's present

1. Clerk to Governors to CEO, 25.3.46.

status was¹.

"Assuming that the Governing Body has relinquished direct grant from the Ministry of Education, then the admission of pupils to the School is no longer governed by reference to the regulations for the conduct of direct grant grammar schools.

"The Committee agrees in principle to the award of Free Places to suitably qualified pupils at independent secondary schools provided such places are needed to supplement the Authority's provision of secondary grammar school accommodation."

As there was a shortage in that part of the County, the Committee would

"be prepared to grant an agreed number of free places to pupils who in the County exam, or under such alternative selective process as the County Council may approve, have indicated their suitability for admission to the grammar school course.

"Perhaps you would be good enough to let me know how many free place pupils the Governors would be willing to admit to the School at the commencement of the Autumn Term 1946."

The Clerk now expressed the hope that Middlesex County Council would continue to be represented on the School's Governing Body. A meeting was arranged between the LEA's three leading Officers, the Clerk to the Governors, their Chairman and former Chairman. The text of an office note on this meeting² was subsequently reproduced for the Education Committee as the proposed basis for an agreed selection procedure which in May the Education Committee accepted³:

".. with regard to the future arrangements for the admission of pupils for whose fees the Middlesex County Council is prepared to be responsible. The County Council will submit to the Governors a list of qualified candidates, i.e. .. who have passed the Authority's written exam for admission to Secondary Grammar Schools and whose parents desire them to be admitted to School B. The Governors will make arrangements for these candidates to undergo an oral exam conducted by the Head Mistress of the School and on the basis of such exam will admit candidates to the School. The Governors anticipate that the number of candidates so admitted will be not less than 25% of the admission of pupils of the 11-12 age

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1. CEO to Clerk to Governors, 9.4.46. This letter is of wider interest. It is a very early statement by the CEO of the Authority of the principle that free places at independent schools are taken by the LEA only when needed to supplement provision in maintained grammar schools. The Ministry Manual taking this interpretation appeared only in 1950. See Chapter 2(d).
 2. Office Note of Discussion on 30.4.46.
 3. MEC, 13.5.46.

range during that year and that they may be in a position to admit candidates in excess of this number, such excess, however, to include any candidates from the Junior Department of the School who have passed the Authority's written exam and the oral test conducted by the Head Mistress and for whose fees the County Council is therefore prepared to accept responsibility."

This agreement put School B as an independent school in much the same position as a direct grant school, except that the School had no obligation to make available "reserved" places if the LEA required them. At direct grant schools - leaving aside the 25% free places - candidates who held reserved places were not required under the regulations to have attended a state primary school, although no doubt they in fact often had done so. Similarly, any candidates whom School B accepted in excess of the 25% proportion as County scholars were to include pupils from the School's own junior department. Thus ended the disputation between the Governors and LEA about entry to School B. At the same time the Education Committee appointed, as it had done in earlier years, four councillors to serve on the School's Governing Body.

For the remaining part of this story no file sources were available¹, and it is therefore not possible to document in the same detail how eventually the issue of repayment of the capital grant was settled. However, from the records of two meetings of the Schools Sub-Committee in 1949 and 1950, and one of the Finance Committee in 1951, it is possible to give an adequate account of the final decision. From these sources it does become clear that for a considerable period the Ministry of Education tried without avail to dissuade the School from going independent. It will be remembered that in October 1945 the Secondary Education Sub-Committee had deferred the decision about repayment of the grant until a communication were received from the Ministry of Education. Four years later the Schools Sub-Committee received a Report² from the CEO on the matter. It briefly summarised the history of the School, the approach made by the Governors to the Middlesex County Council and the LCC in 1930, the sale of land by School A, the agreement that 25%

1. Presumably these are now in the care of the new Outer London Borough in which School B is situated.

2. SchsSC/3/22.9.49, p.80.

of the admissions should be Middlesex scholars and that the capital grant given be repaid on the basis of current valuation in the event of the school ceasing to be grant-aided by the Board of Education or the LEA. This was the last time that current valuation was mentioned.

The total that had been contributed by the County Council was £30,563 and by the Foundation £26,150. The School had been direct grant, and the County Council had paid the fees of approximately 150 girls. Under the 1944 Act, the School Governors had had to decide the status of the School between that of voluntary aided, direct grant or independent. Direct grant status had in fact ceased in September 1945, when the clause about repayment of the County Council's building grant became operative. The future of the School had been of some concern to the Governors, the Ministry of Education and the Middlesex County Council Officers. In discussions with the Ministry the possibility of the school returning to direct grant had been raised and the Finance Committee had therefore deferred to not later than January 1950 the question of repayment. As the Governors had subsequently decided to retain independent status, it was opportune now to consider repayment of the capital grant.

The Schools Sub-Committee appointed three of their number to confer with the Governors and asked the Finance Committee to send a fourth representative¹.

Eight months later such a meeting had still not taken place. In a further Report² to the Schools Sub-Committee, the CEO again stated that under an Order of the Board of Education of 1937, repayment was due - but this time there was no reference to current valuation. Interestingly enough, his Report gave some insight into the Ministry's attitude during negotiations:

"The Ministry's unofficial view appears to be that the fact that the school was Independent is not in itself necessarily sufficient to give rise to a case for repayment under Clause 2 of the Order of the Board of Education of 26.1.37 provided the Direct Grant

1. SchsSC/3/22.9.49, p.82.

2. SchsSC/5/25.5.50, p. 7.

conditions are being complied with in substance. It would seem that the Ministry are inclined to support the Governors in their contention that the School is complying with these Conditions as an appropriate number of places in the School are at the disposal of the Authority. The Ministry have pointed out that the Governors have no power to repay the Authority without an Order of the Minister."

The CEO confirmed that the School continued to accept County Council sponsored pupils, and that the proportion was a little below 50% of the annual intake. He informed the Committee that fees had in 1949 risen to £63 per year, but that Middlesex pupils paid only £60 per annum. However, this was above the average cost of a grammar school place in a maintained school, especially at a girls' grammar school¹. He also reminded the Committee that four County Council representatives sat on the School's Governing Body.

The CEO's Report concluded with a suggestion from the County Council's Clerk. The Education Committee might enter into an agreement with the Governors whereby the latter would undertake to reserve a specified number of places for County Council pupils, charging less for these than for other pupils,

"so that the total saving on Middlesex pupils each year was something in the neighbourhood of 3% on the Council's contribution."

If the debt was £30,000 and the pupil number no more than 140, then their fees would have to be reduced by at least £6 per annum, i.e. twice the present reduction. The Minutes of the Sub-Committee state that the County Treasurer was of the opinion that the County Council was entitled to ask for the repayment of £30,563. The Sub-Committee again agreed that the Governors be asked to appoint representatives to meet three of their own number, who were to base their discussion with the Governors on the following two points²:

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1. There is an office note dated February 1949 which shows that School B was very generously staffed. In the Senior School approx. 1:15, compared with 1:20 in a MCC grammar school. Since the cost of teachers employed is indicative of other costs in a school, this amply illustrates the CEO's point.
 2. SchsSC/5/25.5.50, p.11.

- (i) That the Governors should repay £30,563 to the County Council; or, if this was financially impossible,
- (ii) That the Governors should grant a 3% reduction in fees in respect of County Council pupils.

It would seem that in any further negotiations, the County Treasurer's rather than the County Council Clerk's opinion won the day. In December 1951, eighteen months later, the Finance Committee agreed a basis for settlement, acceptance of which, it was reported, the Chairman of the Education Committee was prepared to recommend. The Finance Committee's Report on this matter was as follows¹:

"In January 1937, the Ministry of Education made an order authorising the Governors of this school to accept a grant of £30,563 which the Council had agreed to make for rebuilding; the order provided that the grant would be a charge on the property of the Foundation and be repayable if, inter alia, the School ceased to be a public secondary school carried on under the conditions from time to time in force under which secondary schools were recognised for grant. As from September 1945, this condition ceased to be fulfilled, and the matter was taken up with the Minister who expressed concern at the possibility of the Governors being required to sell Foundation property for the purpose of repaying the charge. As a result of prolonged negotiations, a variation order is now proposed under which the amount of the grant, to be deemed to be £30,000, would be repayable by 46 annual instalments of £1,260 representing repayment of principal plus interest at approximately 3.2%. The difference of £563 represents a consideration for certain concessions afforded by the Governors."

The County Council was accordingly recommended to agree to a variation order being made by the Ministry of Education on the above terms, subject to any safeguards which the Chief Officers considered necessary. At its January meeting in 1952, the County Council agreed these terms². There was no vote and no mention now of current valuation.

A variation order³ authorising repayment over 46 years was made by the Ministry of Education on the above-mentioned lines, and certain

1. MCC Repts/1951. F.p.79. Report of Finance Committee held 12.12.51 to County Council Meeting 2.1.52.
 2. MCC/185/F.586; 588 (Resolution).
 3. Register of Educational Charities. File for School B. Order sealed on 13.5.52, No.52/814S. in variation of Order sealed 26.1.37, No.37/54S.

safeguards requested by the Chief Officers were embodied in a letter¹ from the Ministry as follows:

"With reference to your letter of the 28th ultimo, I am directed by the Minister of Education to state that she hereby gives an assurance that during the next 46 years she will not make an Order authorising a mortgage or charge of the premises of the ... school without first consulting your Authority. The Minister, however, is not prepared to go further than this."

It would seem from the last sentence that the Chief Officers asked for greater safeguards than the Minister was prepared to give. Perhaps they wanted the school buildings to be 'mortgaged' to the Middlesex County Council until repayment was completed²; in the event they were assured only that they would be consulted before such a mortgage would be permitted.

A calculation may be made to show how much was to be repaid, given the above terms, in monetary and in real values. As yearly payments of £1,260 commenced in 1953³, then in 1999 the 46th and last instalment would be paid off. £30,000 advanced in 1935-37 would be repaid some 60 years later and with interest the total would come to £57,960. So much for the monetary repayment. What does this mean in real terms, allowing for the general rise in values? On good authority⁴, the following estimate is considered legitimate:

- i) Depreciation. From 1935-1945, for ten years, the School was a direct grant school. For these years depreciation has to be deducted from the grant. If depreciation is on average spread over 50 years, then 20% has to be deducted from the £30,000 originally advanced. This leaves £24,000⁵ due to the County Council.

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1. Register of Educational Charities. File for School B. Letter from Ministry of Education to Clerk of MCC, dated 3.3.52.
 2. Ministerial Orders authorising School Foundations to take up loans for building or extending school premises frequently provide that the existing property may be given as security.
 3. Order sealed 13.5.52, No.52/814S provided that the first annual payment was to be made on 1.2.53.
 4. Advice received from a high-ranking member of the DES Statistical Branch.
 5. This amount is very close to the figure mentioned in the Ministry of Education handwritten note dated 4.2.45. contained in File on School B at the Register of Educational Charities. See page 442..

- ii) Appreciation. The appreciation of values between 1936-1945 was in the order of 40%. This raises the sum due to the County Council in 1945 to £34,000.
- iii) Interest due during Negotiations. Interest at 3.2% (the per cent rate agreed by the County Council on recommendation of the Finance Committee - a figure reasonable for the late 1940s and early 1950s) is due on the sum owed for the years 1945-52 during which the school was independent but negotiations were incomplete. This raises the amount due in 1952 by 25%, to £42,500.
- iv) Re-Payment at Compound Interest over 46 years is the same as repayment all at once after 23 years. The total due, therefore, is £89,000 (£42,500 x 2.1).
- v) Extent of Under-Valuation of Repayment. Instead of £89,000, only £58,000 is to be repaid, 35% less than would be due if current valuation had been calculated on the basis here suggested.

Another way of putting it would be to say that instead of repayment of 46 annual instalments of £1,260, it should be £1,900. Or, to translate this into school fees, on a school of 500 pupils, the £1,260 instalments add approximately £2.10.0. whereas £1,900 ones add £3.16.0. per pupil per annum.

(c) Discussion and Conclusion of Case Study

The interdependence of state and private school provision has been demonstrated in this case study. When the Governors of School B raised the question of the School's removal from London, the effect of this on school provision in the area had to be considered. It involved the LCC in providing educational facilities for the children left behind. Similarly, the School's establishment in Middlesex had to be considered within the framework of the existing school facilities of the area. In the first area the fall in pupil numbers contrasted with a rise in the second, and these factors eased the problems of departure and re-establishment for the local authorities concerned. Nevertheless, it was clearly necessary for public provision to bear in mind private provision. At the time when the first area in Middlesex was under discussion as the area to which the School might move, Middlesex County Council already had plans for a school for the growing population there. Its spokesman indicated willingness to

"alter the character of their proposed school"¹
in order that School B could be established there.

Numerous occasions have been related from the available sources which illustrate that local authority and Ministry spokesmen bent over backwards to assist the School Governors solve their problems. The Middlesex County Council staff gave time to the finding of a suitable site and buildings. The Board of Education endeavoured to persuade the LCC to drop its objections to the School's removal, authorised the Middlesex County Council's capital grant, and after the war interceded on behalf of the Governors to try and prevent the Middlesex County Council from insisting on its repayment when the School became independent.

The Governors appear to have taken this attitude of helpfulness completely for granted. Indeed, the observer gains the impression that the Governors accepted as of right all assistance offered, expecting

1. Report of Meeting held at the Board of Education on 10.12.1930.

in return to give precious little. Certainly they were extremely jealous of their autonomy. Their first tentative draft setting out the terms under which a capital grant was to be given them gave full control for approval of building plans and tenders to the Governors, although advice from the County Council's officers would be carefully considered. The final draft, in accordance with the County Solicitor's proposals, made the capital grant subject to approval by the Council of plans and tenders. This, however, did not prevent the Governors from having extra work done, whilst the School was under construction, for which the County Council's prior consent had not been secured. And subsequently the County Council even agreed to pay for this unauthorised work, adding somewhat feebly that no liability for any further additional expenditure would be accepted unless the variation had received prior approval from the County Council. The Governors simply indicated that they had no funds left to pay.

The decisions here examined concerning School B were ultimately about one major issue: on what terms public money was made available to a private school. That the dictum "he who pays the piper calls the tune" is not readily accepted by the recipient of public funds is perhaps not surprising. The independence or autonomy to run their own affairs is vehemently defended by many bodies.

Whilst the Middlesex County Council desired "to give the greatest freedom to their schools"¹, no public authority can hand over large sums of money without some conditions. Thus conditions there were, and in order to obtain publicly provided capital from the County Council, the School Governors had to accept them. The main condition was that the School be run as a direct grant school in accordance with "conditions from time to time in force"². The School Governors clearly did not foresee that in due course they might by Regulations be compelled to take up to 50% of their pupils from the state elementary schools.

1. MEC: Office notes for Chairman, 26.11.1930.

2. Order of the Board of Education sealed 26.1.1937.

Indeed, their letter setting out the terms for the capital grant from the County Council stated that the Governors were not to be compelled to provide more than 25% of the annual places for County pupils. Control over the admission of new pupils was crucial for the Governors of School B. It was on this score that they renounced direct grant school status in 1945. The terms on which public money had been given were no longer tolerable, and with independent status arose liability to repay the capital grant.

Before summarising and commenting on the outcome of the decision-making process in more detail, it is worth while noting some points about the process itself. In this matter of the Middlesex County Council's capital grant to the Governors of School B in order to assist them to move the School from London and re-establish it in Middlesex, the initiative at every stage was taken by the School Governors, first in search of a way out of the School's falling pupil numbers and deteriorating finances, later in protection of their autonomy to select their pupils.

Negotiations were invariably at officer level in the first instance. The Clerk to the Governors conversed by letter, telephone and through interviews with the officers of the County Council's Education Department and/or the civil servants of the Board of Education (later the Ministry). After preliminary exchanges at officer level, the elected representatives came into the picture: the Chairman of the School Governors, usually joined by one or two other Governors, met for discussion the Chairman of the County Council's Education Committee, often also accompanied by one or two other councillors. All these people also attended negotiating conferences at the Board of Education. Whilst the School Board of Governors most likely empowered the Clerk to the Governors to initiate negotiations with the County Council and the Ministry, on the LEA side, the Education Committee or relevant Sub-Committee was brought into discussions only at a later stage, after informal talks had resulted in concrete proposals. This process places local government officers and committee chairmen in a powerful position to settle policy outlines before ever these are raised in committee.

It should also be noted that decisions were long delayed. The first attempt of the School in 1930 to move out of London failed, the negotiations having taken about seven months. Four years later the School Governors made their second approach, and after nearly a year, terms for a capital grant were agreed between the Governors and the Middlesex County Council. It was to be expected that whilst the new school was being built further negotiations over many details would take more time - in fact another two years. Thus it took from 1930 to 1937 before the School Governors could open their School in new buildings. But the main avoidable delay in reaching a decision about the School's removal was caused by the LCC's objections. In the absence of such objections, the School might have been rehoused some four years earlier. It is not clear why the LCC succeeded in swaying the Board of Education to withhold permission, unless the Board just did not wish to impose its will on an important Local Authority. The records examined suggest the Board's permanent officials, including the HMIs concerned, were not convinced by the LCC's objections and were favourably disposed towards the School Governors' first application to move the School. The delay was to the disadvantage of the School; pupil numbers continued to decline and finances deteriorated further.

The other delay revealed in this case study was, however, to the School's advantage. When the Governors decided in 1945 to give notice to cease receiving direct grant from the Ministry, they knew that with independent status for the School, they became liable to repay to the Middlesex County Council the capital grant previously negotiated. They did their utmost, and the Ministry of Education supported their efforts, to get this repayment waived. Not until 1952, seven years later, was this matter settled on terms which were highly favourable to the School. Meanwhile, inflation had further reduced the real value of any repayment, especially as the condition requiring current valuation of the original capital grant was mysteriously dropped during the protracted negotiations. The County Council was the loser on this score; possible causes of this delay will be discussed later.

To turn now to the substance of the decisions in this case study:

first, the capital grant; then, after the war, its repayment. It has been made abundantly clear how dependent the School was on public funds, even before removal from London. Apart from direct grant paid to the School by the Board of Education, fees for pupils was the main source of income; in 1930 over half the School's pupils were LCC financed, under 40% by parents. Only £7,000 was in the Governors' kitty, saved over the years from current income. They also had the old site, a realizable asset. But the School Governors clearly needed a capital grant in order to move. Hertfordshire would have welcomed the School had it been financially independent. The pull of Middlesex lay in the availability of the required capital grant on terms which the Governors found acceptable.

There were two rounds of negotiations about the capital grant from the Middlesex County Council to the School Governors. From the first, in 1930, it became apparent that 45% of the capital for the new school was to be provided by the County Council. During the second round, between 1934 - 1937, the proportion of the capital cost borne by the County Council ultimately rose to 53%. In addition, a low interest loan was made available by the County Council until the old school buildings could be sold. Thus in effect the School Governors were either granted or lent a sufficient sum of public money to cover almost 88% of the cost of moving the school from old to new premises. As regards maintenance, whereas during the first round an annual maintenance grant from the County Council was also under consideration, this the County Council was no longer willing to discuss during the second round. It is not known why this change of attitude occurred between 1930 and 1935. It is clear that when negotiations re-opened, the Governors still hoped to receive both a capital and a maintenance grant.

Why was the County Council in the 1930s prepared to pay more than half the cost of erecting a brand new secondary school, not its own. On this expenditure, no Ministry grant was available. The County Council's own education service had been expanding. A rising population in the County necessitated more educational provision. It was the policy of the County Council to welcome "any new types of school with which

other governing bodies may wish to present us"¹. It was claimed by the County Council that the School's establishment in Middlesex was of "mutual advantage" to School and County Council. The County Council rates - apart from shouldering the building grant of £30,000 - would have no cost of maintenance to bear; yet the School would be available to the growing number of children of the neighbourhood². Had School B not come to the area, sooner or later the County Council would have had to incur the whole expense of building and maintaining its own school.

Perhaps it is worth while probing this contention of "mutual advantage" from the County Council's point of view, since its advantage to the School is beyond dispute, bearing in mind the parlous finances of the School prior to removal from London. A new secondary school was acquired at a total capital cost no greater than it would have been if the County Council had built its own school³. 47% of the capital was provided by the Governors and would therefore not fall on the rates. On the face of it, this seems an excellent bargain, at least from the financial point of view. Furthermore, the County Council had no liability for maintenance costs.

There is, however, another way of looking at the situation. The agreement between the County Council and the Governors specified that the Governors were not to be compelled to make available for County Council scholars more than 25% of the places in the School. Thus in return for 53% of the capital costs the County Council was assured of only 25% of the places. In fact, in the late 1940s, nearly 40% of the pupils in the senior school were County Council scholars⁴, but even this proportion of places was below the proportion of capital costs borne by the County Council in the 1930s.

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1. Undated office typescript, probably as background for CC Chairman's speech on opening the new School on 7.12.37.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Secretary, MEC, to Clerk, MCC. 27.4.37.
 4. Office note dated February 1949. The total school roll was 506 - 144 of these pupils were in the junior department. Out of 362 senior pupils, 140 were financed by the CC. Buildings for the junior school were separately acquired in 1943 and extended at Foundation expense in 1955. In 1961 there were still 140 junior pupils, the number of seniors had risen to 475, a total of 615. (Source: Register of Educational Charities, File for School B, Accounts for 1960/61.)

When the maintenance costs are considered, it is pertinent to ask from what sources the Governors met these costs. The Board of Education's direct grant before the war was one source of income; this, it is true, did not affect the County Council level of rates, but was public money nevertheless. The biggest single source of current income for the School was fees for pupils. The level of fees charged must cover maintenance costs, and therefore the County Council from the rates contributed to maintenance costs to the extent that fees for pupils in the School were paid by the County Council. And these fees were, by the way, higher than the average cost of a grammar school place in a maintained school¹. Since in the late 1940s almost 40% of the pupils in the senior school were County Council sponsored, it may be assumed that 40% of the fee income came from this source. Pre-war it may have been a lower proportion.

It is apparent, therefore, that the County Council's contribution to the capital costs of building the new School exceeded the proportion of school places at its disposal; that as far as maintenance is concerned, the County Council made its contribution to these costs proportionate to the number of places it took up in the school and for which fees were paid. The conclusion must be drawn that the School had the better part of the "mutual advantage" bargain, and that the policy of the County Council was material in establishing and maintaining facilities for parents who preferred to send their children to a private rather than a state school. Had the full costs of capital construction and maintenance fallen on the School Governors, then undoubtedly parents would have had to pay higher fees.

This last point is abundantly confirmed when the negotiations for the repayment of the capital grant are examined. The Governors decided that the new Direct Grant Schools Regulations of 1945 were unacceptable because of the possibility that 50% of their intake might have to be drawn from the LEA's primary schools. In the circumstances they

1. SchsSC/5/25.5.50, p.7.

preferred to acquire independent status for the School. Immediately they enquired whether the capital grant received from the County Council ten years earlier would have to be refunded - as indeed was specified by the Board of Education Order authorising the grant at the time. Fees, they said, would have to rise anyway because of the loss of direct grant from the Ministry, but if the loan were called in by the Middlesex County Council, something like an additional £3.3.0. per annum would have to be added to tuition fees "to the disadvantage of the poorer parent"¹. The hope was expressed that the loan would not be called in, in view of the "general responsibility for secondary education for all pupils within its area" which the County Council had. This presumably meant responsibility for children in the maintained as well as in the private schools. The Governors' view implied that the County Council had a responsibility for the capital construction of private schools because they happened to serve pupils in their area. What was forgotten was that the School would never have received the County's capital grant if it had been independent in the 1930s.

It seems that the possibility of having to charge higher school fees sent shivers down spines at the Ministry as well. For the Ministry used its influence firstly to persuade Governors and County Council to resolve differences which had arisen over the admission of pupils to the School; secondly, to dissuade the Governors from going independent; and, thirdly, to suggest, unofficially, that repayment of the capital grant was not necessarily due so long as the school, even though independent, complied with the direct grant conditions. Ministry and Governors joined hands in arguing that the School did so comply, since an appropriate number of places in the School were at the disposal of the Authority. The fact that the Ministry "pointed out that the Governors have no power to repay the Authority without an Order of the Minister"² must have sounded like a veiled threat to the County Council not to insist on its pound of flesh.

1. Clerk to the Governors to CEO, 1.6.45.
 2. SchsSC/5/25.5.50. CEO's Report, p.7.

It seems likely that Ministry pressure on the County Council's officers to waive repayment of the capital grant led the Clerk to the County Council to make a compromise suggestion to the Schools Sub-Committee; Middlesex pupils, taking up a specified number of places at the School were to pay a fee lower than that charged to parents - the saving to the County Council to be regarded as 3% interest on the original grant. Evidently the County Treasurer disagreed¹, pressing for the repayment of the £30,000. Perhaps he also dared to remind the Schools Sub-Committee that according to the original Order of the Board of Education, repayment was to be at current valuation. If he did so, the fact was not recorded in the Minutes at this stage of the negotiations, although reference had been made to it in the CEO's Report the previous year². Probably in the face of the Ministry's pressure, all the County Council's officers could do was to insist on the obligation of the Governors to repay the £30,000, and to forget the stipulation in the Ministry's own earlier Order that repayment was to be at current valuation. It has been pointed out that the extent of the under-valuation of repayment under terms ultimately accepted was in the region of 35%³, or, translated into fees per pupil per school year, on a School of 500, every pupil would have had to pay £1.6.0. more for 46 years from 1953 onwards had the capital grant been repaid at current valuation. As it was, the terms agreed were equivalent to an additional £2.10.0. per pupil per year.

The Ministry's concern that fees at direct grant schools should not rise unduly was noted in the other case study discussed in Chapter 8. There it was argued by the Ministry that raising of tuition fees is "a thing nobody likes to do"⁴. Consequently the Ministry had there pleaded with the Authority to continue to take up all the free places at the direct grant schools when the Authority was contemplating drastic cuts. In the case of School B, however, more was at stake. Despite the

1. SChs/SC/5/25.5.50. CEO's Report, p.7.

2. Schs SC/3/22.9.49, p.80.

3. The calculation of this is given in detail on pp.451/2.

4. Communication from Ministry to LEA dated 17.4.62. See pp.380/1.

Ministry's endeavours to persuade the Governors to retain direct grant status for their School, the Governors decided on independent status. Ministry pressure on the Authority over the Governors' liability to repay the capital grant represented an attempt to prevent fees at an independent school from rising unduly. Ultimately the explanation for this can only be surmised. No doubt many senior civil servants at the Ministry are themselves the products of independent or direct grant schools. Furthermore, parents who send or expect to send their children to fee-paying schools may well exert disproportionate pressure in Ministry quarters. Indeed, the Ministry had said that much parental discontent "finds its way here"¹.

Attention was drawn earlier to the fact that it took seven years to reach a settlement on repayment of the capital grant. During discussions with the Ministry, the possibility of the school returning to direct grant had been raised, presumably because of the School's constant financial problems. That these continued to be acute is confirmed from two separate sources. The Finance Committee reported to the County Council that during negotiations

"... the Minister ... expressed concern at the possibility of the Governors being required to sell Foundation property for the purpose of repaying the charge..."²

A former member of the Board of Governors referred to constant financial difficulties in the late 1940s, and said the fall in grant from the Ministry (in the years of tapering grant) meant fees had to be put up. Every time this happened, some parents were unable to pay the increase. So the Governors adopted the practice of putting fees up more than the real cost per pupil, so that non-complaining parents helped to pay for children of "needy" parents³. The Ministry even had the idea of making the School one for musically talented pupils receiving direct grant. This would have meant boarding houses for girls and boys,

1. Communication from Ministry to LEA dated 17.4.62, see pp.380/1.

2. MCC Repts/1951. Finance, p.79: Report on Finance Committee meeting held 12.12.51.

3. Interview with former Governor of School B.

as only one such specialised school could be contemplated for the whole country. The Governors eventually turned this proposal down on the issue of co-education¹.

Perhaps the Ministry's persistent endeavours to save the School from financial embarrassment by keeping it as a direct grant school are put into perspective by the attitude of the then Minister of Education to such schools becoming independent. In an adjournment debate in 1945, Ellen Wilkinson deplored the action of schools which had "enjoyed state assistance for some time" and had gone independent². At any rate, it was the Ministry of Education's endeavours to reverse the decision of the Governors in 1945 to go independent which caused the County Council's Finance Committee to defer to not later than January 1950 the question of repayment of the capital grant. It was thus the Ministry's attitude which was responsible for the long delay in settling this matter. When eventually the Governors stood by their original decision to run the School as an independent one, the Schools Sub-Committee appointed representatives to meet the Governors to negotiate a settlement³. That was in September 1949. Eight months later such a meeting had still not taken place, and it appears that it was during those months that the Ministry uttered its veiled threat, which was followed by the compromise proposal of the Clerk to the County Council referred to earlier, which was accepted by the Schools Sub-Committee as a basis for discussion in the event of the Governors finding it financially impossible to repay the £30,000. But by the agreement to spread repayment over 46 years, evidently it was made financially possible for the Governors to meet their obligations; they purchased their independence at a price deflated to their advantage by over one third.

The former Governor, joining the Board during these later years of negotiation, had great difficulty in comprehending why direct grant

1. Interview with former Governor of School B.
2. Hansard, Commons, 415, 9.11.45, Col.1712. By this date 16 direct grant schools had decided to go independent, 18 had chosen to become maintained schools. Before revision of the Direct Grant Schools List, there were 232 direct grant schools.
3. SchsSC/3/22.9.49, p.82.

status had been given up in face of constant financial worries. "Ah, but we have our independence", was the reply of the more experienced members of the Board. It was earlier stated that admission of pupils was the crucial issue in this connection. The case study has shown that the Governors were as reluctant pre-war to allow elementary school children the opportunity to observe children at School B across the fence, as they were post-war to admit them inside their school in numbers sufficient to affect their standards. Ostensibly it was academic standards they were concerned about, but it seems likely that they were also fearful of the social impact of up to 50% recruitment from state primary schools. The Governors claimed that the School's high standards were threatened, for under the new Direct Grant Schools Regulations, preference would have to be given in admission to County Council free place pupils lower on the examination list for entry than fee-paying pupils. According to their experience, this was already happening¹. Moreover, some pupils from the School's own preparatory department had inexplicably failed to pass the County's examination although in the estimation of the School they were suited to an academic course.

The County Council's officers claimed the contrary; experience generally showed free place candidates to be of higher academic promise than the majority of fee-paying candidates. Clearly one of the problems here was how and by whom the suitability of any candidate for entry was judged. There were some less-than-friendly exchanges about the reliability of the respective examinations: the School's own entry examination and the Local Authority's eleven plus examination for entry to grammar schools. This dispute illustrated concretely the difficulties about admission that had been foreseen by some parliamentary spokesmen when the Education Bill was passing through the House. The President

1. It is possible that the discrepancy between the School's and the LEA's examination results was due to the School's entrance examination being such that middle class children scored better than working class children. This might explain the difference of standards of performance by preparatory and primary school children respectively. If this was so, the Governors were probably quite unaware of this fact.

of the Board of Education, R. A. Butler, had decided to retain fees in direct grant schools; at the same time he had assured the House on the one hand that children of parents who could not pay fees would have access to these schools under the new Regulations, and on the other, that parental ability to pay by itself would not gain admission for potential fee-payers. If the officers were right in claiming that free place candidates were generally of higher academic ability than fee-payers, then some parents who could pay were still in a position to 'buy' a place at the expense of abler children whose parents could not pay. This was the case because there was a limited number of free places for which usually there was keen competition.

But the Governors differed from the officers. They even argued at a very early stage that the new Regulations were in conflict with the 1944 Act, but the Ministry ignored this complaint. Just what did the Governors object to? The Regulations laid down that the minimum educational entry standard was to be the same for all pupils. This, presumably, was to prevent parents from buying a place for a child of low potential ability, since the schools were recognised as secondary grammar schools. Thus if entry was decided by examination, this involved the idea of a pass mark, or a cut off point. Candidates, not achieving this standard would be precluded from admission, even if they had been fee-payers in the School's own preparatory department.

However, as it could be assumed that the number of children seeking admission and reaching the pass-mark would exceed the number of available places, some additional principle of selection was needed. The Direct Grant Schools Regulations¹ specified that

".. preference ... shall be given to candidates who are considered on ground of their abilities and aptitudes likely to profit most by the education in the school .."

With this idea of ranking or grading applicants the Governors would not have quarrelled, especially if their own entrance examination determined the grading. They were reluctant to accept the results of the Local

1. S.R.& O., 1945, No.636. Part IV. Conditions Applicable to Direct Grant Grammar Schools. Section 44(a).

Authority examination. It amounted to a second creaming process among all pupils of pass-mark or higher standard. But the Regulations did not leave it at that. It was the reservations which the Governors could not accept:

- ".. so however that such preference shall not affect
- (i) the award of a minimum percentage of free places as required by these Regulations
 - (ii) any arrangements made between the governors and authorities for the admission of pupils..."¹

The free places, a quarter of the total, had to be awarded to pupils who had attended for at least two years a state primary school. By this means access was to be assured to children of ability whose parents could not afford the fees. In addition, the Local Authority could take up another quarter of the places, although for these the two year primary school requirement did not apply. The Governors were unwilling that children from LEA primary schools should be given preference over potential fee-payers who had done better in the School's entrance examination. If there were to be

"equal opportunity for all candidates, less than 25% of the passes come from the elementary schools and over 75% from outside."²

If these claims of the Governors are accepted and entry to the School had been based on competitive grading alone, then less than a quarter of the places would have been awarded to ~~ex~~^{primary} school children. This would have defeated the aim not only of the new post-war Direct Grant Schools Regulations to gain access to the school for children from poorer homes, but even of the old 1935 Regulations. These, too, had insisted that 25% free places be awarded to children from elementary schools. One is bound to ask why the Governors could accept pre-war, as a direct grant school, the 25% entry of elementary school children which post-war seemed so fearful to them. It seems likely that the implications of the war-time silent social revolution which had led to

1. S.R. & O., 1945, No.636. Part IV. Conditions Applicable to Direct Grant Grammar Schools. Section 44(a).
 2. Clerk to Governors to CEO, dated 1.6.45.

an Education Act promising free secondary education for all were unpalatable to the Governors. Pre-war, only a minority of children had entered secondary schools. Now the leaving age was to be raised, and all were to have a secondary education. Perhaps the Governors feared that their school would cease being one for 'nice' middle class girls. Such a fear might also account for the fact that the Governors clung tenaciously to control over admissions:

"If as a Direct Grant School they would be forced to take 25% whatever their standard, they would prefer to be an independent school in order to choose what they wanted." ¹

At the same moment when the Governors were unwilling to draw at least 25% of their senior pupils from the County Council's primary schools, they audaciously hoped that the County Council would pay the fees of 25% of their pupils! It was in response to this request that the County Council stated, at a very early date after the 1944 Act, that free places at independent schools would be taken by the LEA only when they were needed to supplement provision in maintained grammar schools². There was, however, a shortage of places in the area of Middlesex where School B was situated, and thus the County Council was dependent on the School Governors. Thus the County Council concluded an agreement with the Governors for taking free places at School B. It is interesting that following all this fuss, the Governors after all agreed to accept 25% of their entry from pupils of the County Council, selecting this intake from a list of candidates who had passed the Authority's examination and whose parents opted for School B. However, the Head Mistress would submit such candidates to a second oral examination, and admissions would be on the basis of this. Thus final control over entry was retained by the School, although cash continued to flow from the County Council. Actually this procedure was very similar to that operated by the County Council in conjunction with direct grant schools in Middlesex. It was further stipulated that if more than 25%

1. Office notes of Meeting held 18.6.45. See page 440.

2. CEO to Clerk to Governors, 9.4.46.

of the School's places were made available to the County Council, then candidates in excess of this proportion were to include the names of pupils from the School's own junior department who had passed both the Authority's and the School's examination. Thus at least some parents whose children had been fee-payers in the preparatory department could be offered a County financed place in the senior school, a policy much favoured by the School Governors.

It is worthwhile looking briefly at the roles of the various participants in the policy-making process. Given that it was judged correct to use public money to attract School B as a direct grant school to the County of Middlesex, then it can be argued that the County Council's officers did their best at every stage to protect the County Council's interests. The Council's officers tightened up the terms proposed by the Governors on which the capital grant was given and insisted on a repayment clause in the event of the School going independent. When the Governors notified the Education Officer of their intention to cease receiving direct grant, he immediately raised with the Ministry of Education the question of repayment of the grant. When the Ministry of Education did not immediately accept the liability of the Governors to repay and protracted negotiations caused considerable delay in reaching a decision, it was the County Council's Finance Committee which set a time-limit for looking at the issue again. It is true that the Clerk to the County Council made a compromise proposal in breach of the original terms which implied acceptance of the non-recoverability of the capital grant which the County Council had given the School Governors. There was also the fact that current valuation was lost sight of in calculating the amount of repayment, but here all concerned at the County Council end were probably under extreme pressure from the Ministry.

The Ministry's role is more open to criticism. Pre-war, its officials had protected the public interest by ensuring that the effect of School B's removal on local authority schools was carefully considered, both in the LCC and Middlesex areas. The Ministry delayed the School's removal because of LCC objections. It asked the Middlesex County Council

to examine the total secondary school provision in the relevant area of Middlesex before finally agreeing to sanction the establishment of School B. The agreement under which the County Council's capital grant was to be given was amended to protect the County Council against loss due to inflation, in the event of repayment at a later date. But after the war when the School decided to abandon direct grant status, the role of the Ministry's spokesmen is open to criticism. Whilst it could be argued that the officials were right in going to great lengths to prevent the School Governors from going independent, once they had decided nevertheless to do so, the Ministry spokesmen should have given their support to the Middlesex County Council in its endeavour to get its capital repaid on fair terms. The Ministry's attitude and role in this respect amounted to encouraging a Board of Governors to think that they could break their contractual obligations to the County Council to repay the grant. Perhaps a firmer attitude on this score from the Ministry of Education spokesmen would have been more successful in keeping the School as a direct grant one, which was what the Ministry wanted to achieve, bearing in mind the financial difficulties of the Governors.

As regards the Governors, their role quite simply was to strike the best bargain they could - which meant getting the maximum amount of public money in return for the minimum of public control. In the 1930s they were successful in remedying the School's very serious financial position. After the war their policy was much less successful in this respect. Yet they could congratulate themselves on having acquired a new, in due course flourishing, school with material aid from public funds, and then subsequently achieving fully independent status without loss or in any sense full repayment of the capital assets earlier made available to them.

It is thought that this achievement by the Governors is possibly not exceptional. Perhaps there are other schools which now or at some time in the past have overcome their financial problems by dipping into a willing public purse, only later to reassert some of the

independence which had in part to be traded against public financial assistance¹.

1. It is of interest that School B's immediate neighbour, School A, did just this. The story concerning School A was briefly related earlier. See Chapter 7(d).

PART IV:

CONCLUSION

Chapter 10

Summary and Conclusion

This final chapter falls into two sections. The first will draw together the salient points about the participants in the decision-making process and the conditions under which power and influence were exercised by them. The second section will summarise the major hypothesis to which much of the evidence points. This is that the private and state sector of secondary education are inter-dependent and as a total school system form a hierarchy of academic status. Lastly, an assessment will be made how an administrative system is changed.

(i)

In an attempt to understand how change and innovation occurs in the administration of social services, a number of case studies have been undertaken by D.V. Donnison and his co-workers¹. It is of interest to compare Donnison's general conclusions with those that can be drawn from the present study. Donnison classified the participants in the administrative process according to their function as 'providers', 'controllers of resources' and 'determiners of demand'². This three-part model is drawn so that the roles of the participants may be examined³.

The conclusion drawn by Donnison is that

"the providers of a service will usually initiate change and must always carry it through." ⁴

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1. D.V.Donnison, Valerie Chapman and others, Social Policy and Administration, Allen and Unwin, 1965.
 2. Ibid, p.232.
 3. The present author assumes that in the educational service the providers are the local government officers and teachers, the controllers are the councillors and that parents are the main determiners of demand.
 4. D.V.Donnison, op.cit., p.241.

Whilst the last part of this statement has to be accepted as a matter of course, the first part requires substantial qualification in the light of this author's study. Donnison's view may be tenable in relation to those aspects of social policy and administration which have not been seen to be politically sensitive. But there is no guarantee that this will remain so. Even Donnison agrees that

"No one would deny that elections do sometimes bring about important changes in the policies of local services: we only wish to establish that such changes usually originate from other sources..."¹

But Donnison's analysis accords no positive role to the political parties in the running of local government services; indeed the process of change in social administration is summarised with almost no reference to political parties.

By contrast, it is impossible to conclude this study without reference to the political parties. Secondary schools policy was in Middlesex politically controversial. It was the Labour councillors who initiated proposals for comprehensive schools². There were, of course, other issues on which the providers took the initiative: either officers on their own or jointly with teacher representatives.

The detailed study of several policy proposals concerning secondary school organisation in Middlesex suggests that abstract decision making models as a tool for understanding a complex process are open to criticism, or possibly that the right models have yet to be found. Both misleading generalisations and generalisations of such abstraction as to be of little value have to be guarded against.

Another form of analysing the roles of different participants in administration is by drawing a line between the proper function of the committee on the one hand and of the officer on the other. Donnison considers that the job of committees (or governing bodies, to use his expression)

1. D.V.Donnison, op.cit., p.249.

2. The one case study included in Donnison's book on secondary schools policy showed that the Council had taken the initiative.

"does not consist mainly in initiating or directing changes in policy..."

"...the .. principal role is to approve, modify or reject decisions which commit the providers to significant changes in their objectives... they require a judgment about priorities, objectives and risks."

"The governing body, provided it is adequately advised by appropriate senior officials, should be equipped for this purpose."¹

This way of drawing the line implies that the ideas on which policy is based originate from the professional side, whereas lay members 'approve', 'modify' or 'reject'. It is, in effect, merely another way of stating the conclusion that the providers usually initiate change.

K. C. Wheare in discussing the relationship between a local authority committee and its officials outlines the job of the committee as follows:

"to decide what shall be done, to appoint those who are to do it, and to see that they do it well; ... it must reserve to itself the right to receive all such information, to make all such decisions and appointments, and to take all such actions as are necessary for the proper and efficient performance of these functions."²

The committee's chief officials

"are entitled to express their views about what services should be provided and how a service is to be administered. ... But in this matter, the official advises; the committee decides."

"Finally, chief officials are concerned to see that a service is run well... but they are responsible to the committee..."³

Certain types of committee chairmen, committee members and officers are then described by these authors in assumed roles, some of whom are commended, others criticised. Wheare is critical of the committee chairman who is appointed by seniority, who stays too long in office, who falls under the spell of his chief officer. The type of officer is in turn criticised who tries to 'capture' his chairman in order to run the committee through him. An alliance between chairman and chief officer either to dominate or to be in constant warfare with the committee is definitely

"treason to the whole idea of government by committee."⁴

1. Donnison, op.cit., p.250-51.

2. K.C.Wheare, Government by Committee, Oxford University Press, 1955, p.177.

3. Ibid, p.178.

4. Ibid, p.182.

A good chairman, on the other hand, is a real leader of his committee, whereas a good official must be capable of combining several roles. He

".. must at times be a committee's nurse, at times its tutor, at times its conscience, at times its candid friend - yet always its servant, never its master."¹

Information must be presented to the committee in good time so that adequate discussion can precede decisions, but a committee must not be choked by its official.

In this connection Donnison suggests that it is all too easy for officers to

"submerge their governing body in a mass of confusing detail because they do not know how to pose clearly the questions which the committee really needs to consider, or simply because they feel that sufficient material must somehow be found to fill every meeting."²

Officers require a sensitive appreciation of the committee's role

"if they are to distinguish the things the governing body should consider from the things it need not be aware of ... It is often difficult to secure and maintain a clear appreciation of these distinctions."³

In the study of local administration, whether in the educational or any other field, some use can be made of these general criteria to distinguish the proper function of various participants. But the creation of 'good' and 'bad' models of the officer-chairman or officer-committee relationship promotes insight in only the most general sense when divorced from the context of actual decisions. It can be accepted that a good officer should always be the 'servant' of his committee but never its 'master' or that a good committee should not interfere in executive tasks. But this alone does not make us much wiser.

The study of actual decisions over a longer time-span clearly illustrates that the roles played by officer, chairman, committee member or indeed other participants changes from time to time. Does this mean that sometimes they play their 'proper' role, whereas at others they overstep the boundaries of what for them is the correct role? The conclusion drawn from this study of decisions made in Middlesex over twenty years is that roles of participants do and should change, depending both

1. K.C.Wheare, op.cit., p.204.
 2. D.V.Donnison, op.cit., p.251.
 3. Ibid, p.251.

on the personality of particular persons and on the actual issues at stake at a particular time.

It is here that a distinction may usefully be drawn between the function and the role of participants when analysing the process of change in public administration. The two terms are often used interchangeably. Function may be regarded as the officially defined range of duties and powers of particular participants in their capacity as officers, councillors or teachers. For the formal or legal definition of function one would turn to the statutes, rule books and standing orders of an organisation. Although these can be changed, this is usually a slow process. Role, on the other hand, may be taken to mean how individual participants fulfil their function. This will vary, depending on the issues at stake and on the personal and social interpretation of how the function should be fulfilled.

If we say it is the function of an officer (not the role) to be the committee's servant, this is compatible with many different roles at different times, including the important one of initiating change. Again, if we say that it is the committee's function to decide what shall be done but not to execute it, this also is compatible with a variety of roles over time, including the one of taking the initiative on an issue which at an earlier date was regarded as a purely 'administrative' and not a 'policy' matter. Thus there is no activity of an officer which could not at some time be considered to be affected by policy decisions.

Without examining the content of the particular policy decision, and the type and degree of conflict it evokes at any given time, it is impossible to understand the actual roles played by participants in the administration of a service. The role open to participants is influenced not merely by their own particular skills, attitudes, experience and function, but by whether the decision concerns an issue which is subject to social and political dispute or which falls within the present consensus of opinion. Politically sensitive issues may be explosive in the party political sense, or may touch the nerve centre of some entrenched interest which will therefore exert political pressure through the normal channels, quite possibly within both political parties¹.

1. The early Fabians called this 'permeation'. See R.C.K. Ensor's essay on this subject in The Webbs and their Work, ed. Margaret Cole, Frederick Muller Ltd., 1949, pp. 57-74.

It is of interest that an issue may be politically sensitive at one time but not at another. The comprehensive school, eleven plus selection and LEA places in fee-paying schools all illustrate this fact. The multilateral or comprehensive school was certainly not subject to party dispute immediately after the war, but became so soon afterwards. Changes in the methods used in eleven plus selection were regarded very much as an 'administrative' matter in the early fifties, but became an explosive issue in the later fifties and were then treated as a matter of 'policy'. Decisions about LEA places in fee-paying schools were taken without dispute after the war and well into the fifties. In the sixties, however, political pressures were exerted on this matter.

It is now possible to turn to an examination and discussion of the roles which were played by different participants in the formation of secondary schools policy in Middlesex. It will be helpful for this purpose to summarise and briefly comment on the particular decisions which were studied. Tables are included at the end of this chapter¹ which set out for each decision who initiated the original proposal, whether it was blocked or modified and if so by whom, the result, the degree of consensus or conflict, and the crucial policy makers. By crucial is meant that the role played by these participants determined the outcome.

The role of the councillors will be dealt with first. In order to see their role in proper perspective the relevant party attitudes to secondary education will also form part of this discussion. Secondly, the role of officers will be considered in the context of changing circumstances. Thirdly the Ministry's role will be examined. Finally, the influence of both teachers and parents on policy decisions will be considered.

Councillors

Councillors provide the lay element in local administration. There were, in fact, very few councillors who played an important role as far

1. These tables may be unfolded so that they can be easily consulted in connection with the text.

as the education service was concerned. Repeatedly it was said in interviews that councillors in general knew so little about education, and that the Education Committee Chairman, Vice-Chairman and perhaps two or three others who were at any one time Chairmen of Sub-Committees, ran the education service in so far as it was run by councillors. This means that within each party group there were a few 'experts' on education who in the main set the pace and had the close regular contact with officers which gave them access to information. It should here be said that information was readily forthcoming when councillors wanted it, which is not to say that councillors were always well informed. In fact, the sheer bulk of committee papers must be overwhelming for anyone, more so for those councillors who have full-time jobs.

It is of interest how certain councillors rise to positions of leadership. The Chairmanship of the Education Committee, especially in the case of a County Council, is really a full time job. As few as three people filled the Chairmanship of the Middlesex Education Committee for fifteen out of the nineteen years between 1946 and 1965. One of them entered council work during the war on retirement from a distinguished career in the civil service. Since he first became Chairman in 1949, he must by then have been in his seventies. The two women, one Conservative and one Labour, were about twenty years younger. They had both been teachers and were above all interested in the work of the Education Committee. As they were married, they were able to devote most of their time to voluntary public work. Three of the remaining four people, all retired men, who were Chairmen of the Education Committee, occupied the position for only one year each. The fourth, a Conservative and a retired teacher, was Vice-Chairman for six years and Chairman for two.

One criterion for rising to an important Chairmanship is, therefore, that the councillor concerned has the time and financial means to shoulder the responsibilities involved. Beyond this personality and experience counts for a great deal. The Labour councillor who became Chairman of the Education Committee had already been a member of the Middlesex County Council for eleven years. She was well known to her group, interested in education and consequently it was natural that her party group turned to

her when Labour won control of the County Council after the war. By temperament conciliatory but firm, there were occasions, judging by some accounts, when her emotion got the better of her reason. One of her political opponents described her as very experienced politically, and conceding nothing in that way. She was also regarded as a moderate by impatient elements within her own party, especially in the later years.

On the Conservative side three people between them shouldered the main responsibilities in education, two of whom had been teachers. One of them was very able but considered to be somewhat aloof. She was Chairman of the Schools Sub-Committee and Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee before taking over its Chairmanship. She was of the view that in 1949 her party group would have accepted almost any policy on secondary school organisation provided that it was not comprehensive. She added that it was due to the imaginative proposals of the officers that a tripartite policy was not adopted. Hence the crucial role lay with the officers rather than the councillors in Decision No.2.¹

Policy was in her view "hatched" by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and the leading officer; she accepted it as natural that when in opposition one knew nothing about policy, whereas her opposite number spoke of equal access to officers when in opposition. Conservative party group meetings she considered a mere wrangling for positions. In the end she had too many difficulties with her own group to retain the Chairmanship. The Conservative group decided that the Vice-Chairman should succeed her. Being not such a strong personality, he probably gave less offence. His view of policy making was that if you have a good officer, you accept his advice, if not, you dictate the policy as Chairman.

Most difficult to explain is the position of leadership over many years of the third Conservative. He was not at all a party man, initially had no knowledge of education, but learnt fast, and by all accounts was often at cross purposes with his party colleagues. He had entered the Council during the electoral truce and had only later become identified with the Conservative group. He was not beholden to them in any narrow

1. For details, see tables at the end of this chapter. The seven Decisions studied have been numbered for easy reference.

doctrinal sense. Yet he rose very rapidly to the Chairmanship of the largest spending committee.

Undoubtedly his very great ability as an administrator, his intellectual stature and shrewdness, and the fact that he had time, all contributed to his success. A leading political opponent described him as intellectually far superior to any other Conservative on the County Council and superior to most on the Labour side also. Precisely what concessions he had to make to his group in order to retain his pre-eminent position to the end is not known. It is known that there were occasions when his party group would have liked to dispense with him. He was ninety before he withdrew from public work and still extremely alert. On being interviewed, he immediately conversed about yesterday's Parliamentary debate. As an administrator by experience he probably responded to initiatives rather than taking them, but if there was trouble brewing from any quarter he was on the spot, altering this report or that proposal, so as to smoothe things over. Thus he was a politician, but not really a party man. In this light his role in Decision No.6, which is discussed later, can be comprehended.

The three councillors who had been the leading Conservative spokesmen on education referred to no educational policy which as Conservative Party representatives they had wanted to introduce. This is not to suggest that they were not deeply concerned with improving the education service, but it does contrast their approach with that of the Labour group leaders on education who wanted to change the educational structure. This difference might be summarised by saying rather tritely that the Conservatives wanted to conserve and improve, whereas Labour wanted to change and improve the education service. This difference of approach had repercussions especially for the officers. But before discussing the role of the officers, more has to be said about party attitudes to secondary schools policy.

It was shown in Chapter 4 that on secondary school organisation party attitudes were somewhat fluid immediately after the war. The Conservative Chairman of the Education Committee until Labour took control in 1946 was sympathetic to the multilateral idea. The distinction between

multilateral and comprehensive forms of organisation had not then been drawn and it was envisaged that a distinct grammar stream would form a separate side within the multilateral school. When the comprehensive idea took shape there were differences of opinion within the Labour group about the future of the grammar school. But the Labour Leader and the Labour Chairman of the Education Committee were strongly in favour of the inclusion of grammar schools in comprehensive schemes, and their view carried the day within the group.

That Labour councillors in the end decided to include grammar schools in comprehensive schemes from the start (see Decisions No.1 and No.3) was responsible for making the comprehensive school an issue of conflict between the parties. All Conservative councillors who were contacted were opposed to the disturbance of existing grammar schools, although they claimed at the same time that comprehensives were acceptable in suitable areas. Thus Conservatives had to defend eleven plus selection as an essential part of the administrative arrangements for transfer from primary to secondary school. When Labour councillors pressed for the abolition of the formal eleven plus in 1958 (Decision No.4) Conservative councillors voted against this change.

In Middlesex the proposed size of comprehensive schools was not what caused the issue to become controversial between the parties. Until the Ministry insisted that comprehensive schools had to be at least ten form entry, both Labour and Conservative groups favoured small schools. Some individual Labour councillors wanted large schools from the start, but they failed to convince their party colleagues. Conservatives on regaining control insisted that newly built schools should be small. In fact several school plans on the drawing board when the Conservatives won the County Council elections were immediately changed to a smaller size, even before Decision No.2 had been made. That they could later not be turned into comprehensives was probably of more importance for Conservatives than size on its own merits.

Once the parties had taken up their respective policy positions for and against the comprehensive school, this influenced the roles of all participants. Here it is the role of councillors which concerns us. Conser-

vative councillors could no longer accept, let alone advocate, comprehensive schools. They had to oppose them even if their personal judgment was at variance with that of their party. There was one exception to this. One of the comprehensive schools started by Labour councillors in 1948 was later stoutly defended by local Conservatives. In this role, however, they were for several years at cross purposes with the Conservative group at County level. That the Conservative controlled County Council so persistently tried to undermine that comprehensive school by trying to establish in the same area either a grammar or a modern school was an indication of the fervour with which Conservatives took the anti-comprehensive line.

The eminent Conservative Chairman of the Education Committee over many years claimed he had opposed comprehensive schools purely as a matter of party politics, whereas the new Chairman of the Schools Sub-Committee in 1949 had been told by her party group that she could have that Chairmanship only on condition that she would not sponsor the establishment of any more comprehensive schools. Labour councillors, for their part, had to support the incorporation of a grammar school in a comprehensive scheme in 1948 even if they had doubts about the matter, as at least one Labour councillor had.

There was, however, one aspect of grammar school provision on which there was no clear party attitude. Labour and Conservative councillors alike accepted the arrangements of the LEA for placing the County's brightest pupils in fee-paying schools. Conservative councillors looked upon this favourably as a matter of course, especially in so far as the direct grant schools were concerned. More puzzling is the attitude of Labour councillors. In theory they were aware that fee-paying placements ran counter to their professed comprehensive school policy. When a comprehensive system had been established, they held, these arrangements would have to be reviewed. They also felt that fitting these schools into a comprehensive system depended more on national than on local policy. Meanwhile there was no clear party line. On the Labour side the argument that able children should be given equality of opportunity irrespective of the financial circumstances of their parents carried weight. Thus many Labour as well as Conservative councillors valued

these opportunities given to children from within the state system.

In the absence of any clear party line, it was in the early 1960s possible for individual Roman Catholic councillors within each party group successfully to exert pressure on behalf of the Roman Catholic independent schools when Decision No.6 was under discussion. Roman Catholic representatives outside the Council Chamber no doubt knew how to exploit the situation within each party by appealing to the appropriate party ideologies. At one point Conservative Roman Catholic councillors engaged in cross-party voting at a time when Labour councillors had also been persuaded, by a Roman Catholic colleague, to support on means test grounds a denominational sectional interest.

Permeation tactics had succeeded because there was no party commitment. Supposing the Labour group had been opposed to LEA fee-paying placements as a matter of party policy, Labour councillors most probably would then have supported the proposals of the officers on this occasion, which in turn would have made it less necessary for the Conservative Chairman to assuage Roman Catholic councillors in his own party. Indeed, it is of interest that the Chairman had in the first instance supported the proposals of his officers. But when pressures were brought to bear on him, he changed his mind. The concessions he then made and which the Committee accepted were advantageous to all the fee-paying schools, not merely to Roman Catholic ones. In this particular decision the Chairman thus played a crucial role.

In general, the role of councillors was to throw up a very few leaders who remained answerable to their respective party groups, and to support these leaders in council, especially when in office. The role of Chairmen in policy making differed according to whether an issue was subject to party political dispute and also whether the spokesman was Labour or Conservative. If no clear party line had been established, the leader was much more open to sectional pressures both from within and from outside his party. Labour leaders had a clear line to follow, namely to start comprehensive schools and abolish selection, and therefore kept the initiative in their hands. Conservatives on the other hand were united in opposition to these changes, but lacked positive alternatives of

of their own. They therefore relied in the main on the officers for policy proposals.

Officers

It was said earlier that without examining the particular policy decision and the type of conflict it evokes, it is not possible to understand the roles played by participants. The truth of this is most striking when the role of the officers is examined.

To take Decision No.6 first. It was shown above that the question of LEA fee-paying placements was not subject to party political dispute. Throughout the period this was a matter on which the officers took the initiative in proposing to the Education Committee what the Authority's policy should be. Thus their role as initiators remained the same, but whereas their initiatives succeeded in the earlier years, changing circumstances were responsible for failure in the case of Decision No.6(d). On earlier occasions proposals made by the officers had been accepted by the Committee, but on this occasion opposition was encountered from several quarters. In short, the issue had become politically sensitive and officers and councillors were subjected to pressures. The other participants now resisted instead of accepting or being ignorant of the officers' proposals.

The officers felt thoroughly frustrated about the outcome of their initiative in Decision No.6(d). Why, then, had they taken this initiative? Were they taken unawares by the opposition they subsequently encountered? The evidence showed that they realised the issue was a 'delicate' one, even among themselves. Despite this, after officer discussions they agreed to propose substantial cuts to the Committee. This decision illustrates how officers interpreted their role. As servants of the LEA they saw their role as defenders of the maintained school system and wanted it to flourish. In particular the officers took pride in the fact that in Middlesex a high proportion of pupils were given the opportunity of a grammar school education, and they wanted the maintained schools to do as well as the fee-paying ones.

It is a reflection of ambivalent attitudes among officers that on

the one hand they wanted the maintained grammar schools to produce academic results comparable to those of the fee-paying schools, but that on the other they took it for granted that the fee-paying schools should have the first pick, thus depriving the state system of the brightest children. This confusion arose because equality of opportunity had been interpreted as opportunity for able children to go to the 'best' schools irrespective of their parents' financial circumstances. The scholarship ladder of pre-war days had given academically bright children access to both state and private grammar schools. That system the officers inherited and defended.

It was in the changed circumstances of the 1960s that many more teachers and officers became conscious of the effect of creaming by the fee-paying schools on the standard of work in the maintained schools. At a time when demographic trends and successful expansion of maintained provision combined to eliminate shortage of grammar school places, what was more logical than for the officers in defence of the maintained system to propose that private places be cut? It would save the Authority money, it was in accordance with statutory obligations, and it would enhance the standards of work in the Authority's own schools.

The officers had to accept their defeat in Committee as gracefully as they could. They had done their duty in drawing attention to all the relevant facts. As their defence of the maintained system had met with so little success, the officers must have been grateful that certain administrative changes which they regarded as within their own control gave them the opportunity to influence parental choice of school. The lay-out of the form on which parents expressed their preferences for particular schools was altered in order to draw less attention to fee-paying school places and more to maintained grammar school ones. Officers hoped that this change would lead some ambitious parents to opt for the state rather than the private grammar schools. It was a case of recovering lost ground by administrative methods and illustrates how very difficult it is to draw any line between 'policy' and 'administrative' matters. Control over administrative detail gives officers opportunities for playing a subtle role towards achieving their own ends in roundabout ways.

Middlesex County Council had before the war been Conservative dominated. As the Labour group became an organised minority in the 1930s, this gradually led to party organisation on the Conservative side also, and reduced the role of independent councillors. That the County Council became subject to political see-sawing after the war was to affect the role of officers profoundly. Officers are the servants of their Committee irrespective of which party controls the Authority. They must therefore remain impartial as between the parties in order to assure for themselves a relationship of confidence when the 'outs' move 'in'. In this situation the initiating role of officers is affected because they cannot risk giving guidance to the Committee on an issue which is disputed between the parties unless the Committee first instructs them to do so. Such an 'instruction' protects the officer, because responsibility for the preparation of a statement advocating for example a comprehensive or a selective secondary schools structure rests with the Committee, as it did in Decisions No.1 and No.2.

Yet it is inevitable that officers, like other people, have their own views. The evidence makes it clear that the officers were personally not in favour of the comprehensive school proposals involved in Decisions No.1 and No.3, nor of the abolition of the formal eleven plus in Decision No.4, whereas they were personally identified with the proposals for a bipartite pattern in Decision No.2. Yet they loyally carried out decisions with which they disagreed, addressing meetings of parents on the advantages of the comprehensive school and answering sharp and critical questions in 1948. In 1959 they worked out jointly with the teachers a new selection procedure even though they had professional reservations about it.

Given their personal views, see-sawing in Middlesex meant that officers could successfully take policy initiatives with respect to secondary schools organisation under Conservative control whereas their role under Labour was to work out proposals with which they were out of sympathy. The Committee's instructions were a mere formality in the one case but not in the other.

It was stated earlier that when the comprehensive school was

originally discussed in Middlesex, opinion was fluid both between and within the two parties. Thus the officers could play a different role in 1946 from the one they had to assume by 1948. The Committee instructed the CEO to produce a report as to how the multilateral or comprehensive idea could be implemented. This the officer did, and the Committee accepted his report, except for one amendment. The officer had suggested that the grammar schools should be able to opt out of comprehensive schemes. The Committee decided otherwise. The CEO probably thought his professional opinion would carry the day, especially as no firm decision had yet been made about the future of the grammar schools. But officers dislike being overruled by their Committee. They regard it as a rebuff and find it an embarrassment. The CEO made sure through the Chairman of the Education Committee that his ideas were in future tested out first in private in the Labour group, and that he was fully acquainted with their thinking before committing himself in public.

As far as Labour's pro-comprehensive views were concerned, the CEO endeavoured to persuade the Labour group to experiment with the idea before committing the Authority to the hilt (Decision No.1). When two years later twelve comprehensive schemes were proposed, it was probably due to his advice that the number was cut to six (Decision No.3). But on the inclusion of a grammar school the councillors were adamant and he therefore had to bow to their wishes.

There were two issues on which there was no conflict between officers and councillors. The introduction of extended courses in secondary modern schools (Decision No.5) was initiated by way of a formal policy resolution by the Labour councillors and the officers were well content to improve further the service of which they were so proud. When it became known that School B, which the County Council had helped to establish in the 1930s, intended to go independent, the officers speedily defended the interests of the Council by drawing attention to the School's contractual obligation to repay the pre-war capital grant (Decision No.7). In face of outside pressures, officers and councillors rallied and jointly pressed their case against the School governors and the Ministry.

The role of officers in policy making was clearly affected by the fact that control of the County Council alternated between the parties. They continued to exercise initiative, but on issues which were subject to party political controversy, they preferred to be formally instructed. Nevertheless, under Conservative Chairmen their initiative was less curbed partly because the Conservative group lacked a positive policy and partly because they saw their role as defenders of a system built by themselves and their predecessors. Through their personal relationship of confidence with successive Chairmen, the officers endeavoured to exert a moderating influence against any form of political extremism.

The Ministry

The Ministry plays a crucial role in many LEA policy decisions. In the decisions covered by this study a number of roles were taken up. Proposals for comprehensive schools (Decisions No.1 and No.3) were considered in certain respects unsatisfactory and the Ministry at the time favoured the tripartite pattern. Its Circulars expressed great caution about comprehensive schools. Yet the Authority's proposals were not rejected outright. The Ministry did not adopt the role of a forbidding father, but rather that of asking the over-eager child to reconsider its proposed line of action. As regards Decision No.1, the matter was subsequently settled by change of political control of the County Council.

But the role of the Ministry in Decision No.3 is interesting. It had the power under the Act to overrule the Labour councillors on the establishment of comprehensive schools, but did not overtly use it. Instead the Authority was asked to submit more detailed proposals for only two schools out of its proposed six. The Authority was further advised to select areas where conditions favoured success. In the Ministry's opinion these included that local parents and teachers should be sympathetic to the scheme. As the Ministry still had to give final approval to the schools actually selected by the County Council, the stated conditions were taken to heart by the Education Committee. Thus the Ministry had played the role of curbing the hasty introduction of changes with greater success than the officers. Officers could be

instructed. The Ministry had to be ⁴persuaded to approve and in the end did approve three comprehensive schools.

Decision No.3 had been taken before the Minister had approved a Development Plan for Middlesex. By the time Decision No.5 came to be implemented during Labour's second term of office, the Minister had long since approved the County's Development Plan based on selection at eleven for either grammar or modern schools. The County Council had resolved to improve the secondary modern schools, knowing full well that the Minister was at that time unlikely to approve comprehensive schemes, and would certainly disallow any attempt to incorporate existing grammar schools in such changes. When some Labour-controlled Divisional Executives nevertheless tried to introduce comprehensive schemes by the back door, the Minister made it very clear to the County Council that he would not countenance any non-selective secondary school proposals for inclusion in the building programme, as these would be contrary to the LEA's Development Plan policy. Nor would he approve the discontinuance of any existing grammar school. The Minister on this occasion used the device of threatening to withhold approval of the Authority's building projects. In doing so the Minister restricted the freedom of the LEA on a matter which the Act had left open, and thus in effect made Labour councillors concentrate on improving the secondary modern schools, which conformed to the current White Paper policy.

In Decision No.6 the Ministry pleaded with the CEO for more generous treatment of the direct grant schools than had been proposed by the Authority. Here the role of the Ministry as the protector of the direct grant schools came clearly into play. It could be said that the Ministry regarded these schools as their special concern, in a way similar to the regard which LEA officers had for the maintained grammar schools. Apart from this indication, the evidence in general supports the view that the Ministry considered the direct grant schools as part of the state sector. In this case the Ministry had no actual power because the discretion lay with the Authority, but its plea for delay and less severe cuts was heeded. The Ministry feared the outcry from vocal

parents against both cuts in LEA places and the consequent rise in fees.

This special brief for the direct grant schools finds another expression in Decision No.7. Attempts were made by the Ministry to persuade School B to retain direct grant status rather than go independent after the war. The uncertainty over several years of the School's precise status helped to postpone the repayment of the capital grant made by the County Council before the war. Before repayment could commence a variation order had to be made by the Ministry. This gave it the power to exert pressure over the Authority to secure a settlement favourable to School B. The County Council, however, resisted these pressures and after protracted negotiations a variation order was issued which, however, overlooked the matter of current valuation. It should be noted that current valuation was insisted upon by the Ministry in the 1930s in the era of the Geddes axe whereas in post-war years considerations of public parsimony were apparently no longer uppermost in its mind. It is clear that the Ministry was aware that the School's fees would have to rise even more than the giving up of direct grant status necessitated. It also feared the School governors might be compelled to sell foundation property. This showed the regard in which the Ministry held the old foundation schools.

As the senior partner in the provision of the education service the Ministry's function is to ensure that LEAs fulfil their statutory duties. In this it assumes various fatherly roles: advising, moderating, pleading, cautioning, and ultimately wielding the big stick of refusing its approval to any proposals from the LEA which offend against the general political consensus in the country. Beyond this, the Ministry regarded itself as the protector of the direct grant and other old foundation schools.

Teachers

Since the success of the LEA's policy depends so much on teacher cooperation their role is both important and often a difficult one. Teachers had to be careful not to become involved in party disputes.

It is interesting that a teacher representative claimed during an

interview to have been the person to have raised in Committee the question of the exclusion of grammar schools from comprehensive schemes (Decision No.1). A Labour councillor then took the matter up and this resulted in the important decision that grammar schools should be included in comprehensive schemes from the start. The teacher representative was able to play that particular role at that point in time because opinion on the future of the grammar schools was still fluid and cut across political parties.

By contrast, once the LEA was committed to the organisation of secondary schools on the comprehensive principle, grammar school teachers as servants of the Council recognised that they had to accept this policy, but felt it their duty to express reservations on professional grounds. In a Joint Four memorandum they criticised the Authority's intention to establish small comprehensive schools because this would endanger satisfactory sixth form work. The same objection was later made by the Minister when he referred back the Authority's Development Plan.

Similarly, when Decision No.4 had been taken by the LEA, the Teachers' Panel of the Joint Consultative Committee, again without questioning the Committee's policy, expressed certain reservations. A majority of teachers had in a ballot opposed the proposed changes in eleven plus selection procedure. Despite this and the particular reservations voiced by the Teachers' Panel, teacher representatives had to bow to the Committee's decision. Jointly with the officers they worked out details of the new selection procedure to the introduction of which they had been opposed. In contrast to earlier years, changes in selection procedure were no longer treated as a purely professional matter.

It is difficult to assess the degree of influence exercised by teachers because on the one hand they have to accept the LEA's policy and on the other, as practitioners, they are often the first to be aware of any drawbacks when policy is implemented. When Decision No.6 was under consideration, for example, teachers were among those who drew the attention of officers to the effect on maintained schools of creaming by the fee-paying schools.

From the teachers' point of view the most difficult situation arose

as a result of Decision No.3. The Authority was at fault for not consulting the teachers early enough about comprehensive proposals for particular schools. This created strained relations made even worse by the confusion that arose between public criticism by teachers of the comprehensive principle in general and private criticism of the detailed implementation of the LEA's policy.

In one area of Middlesex members of the Joint Four opposed the implementation of a scheme involving a grammar school at a meeting called by parents, thus encouraging dissenting parents who had already formed a protesting association. By this action certain grammar school teachers stepped outside the bounds of the master servant relationship between themselves and the County Council. One headmaster nearly lost his job but for the intercession of the NUT Divisional Secretary.

In the same area members of the NUT were greatly agitated about the professional implications of proposals for a secondary modern school. They were, however, careful not to overstep the boundaries of their proper function. Between them and the Authority the NUT Divisional Secretary acted as a liaison, thus stepping into the breach caused by the Authority's lack of consultation and poor public relations. The NUT Divisional Secretary was willing and able to play this role for three reasons: he saw it as part of his job to act as conciliator between the Authority and his members, he was pro-comprehensive and therefore anxious to help the Authority in this particular situation, and he was better informed than most councillors through his relationship of confidence with the CEO.

In contrast to these difficulties, it was through the cooperation of teachers in another part of the County that the Authority was able to implement its comprehensive proposal fairly smoothly. In this case the teachers saw to it that parents meetings were called and the proposed changes were fully explained. The key to the Authority's success here was that the leading headmaster in the area was pro-comprehensive and had propagated the comprehensive principle at meetings of teachers and parents for some time before his own school became involved in the change.

Teachers are most closely involved in the detailed implementation of

educational policies. It was shown that the enlistment of their personal sympathies for proposed schemes proved crucial to the successful introduction of change in the schools. Being in closer contact with parents than other participants, teachers are on the one hand most subject to parental pressures and on the other in a key position to influence parental opinion.

Parents

There were two areas of Middlesex in which parents exercised overt organised pressure in connection with Decision No.3. In one case parents formed an association to defend the local grammar school against incorporation in a comprehensive scheme. They protested vociferously to the Authority, the Minister and MPs. After the Minister had stressed the importance of parental and teacher support for success, the scheme was dropped by the LEA, ostensibly for other reasons. In the other area the parent teacher associations at local schools supported the conversion of their secondary modern into a comprehensive school. But the following year here also a protesting parents association was formed when it became known that the Authority intended to abolish the eleven plus examination and place all local children in the comprehensive school. The LEA's attempt to give the newly established comprehensive school a balanced intake foundered on the rock of parental opposition and in the process the County Council was involved in taking Counsel's Opinion on parental rights under Section 76 of the Education Act. A sufficient number of local parents nevertheless continued to support the comprehensive school and its staff. Without this the school might not have survived in face of fierce local protests.

It was generally known that parents eagerly sought grammar school places for their children. When the officers suggested that the number of LEA places at fee-paying schools be cut (Decision No.6), it was not only the organised representations on behalf of Roman Catholic parents which influenced policy makers. The Ministry, the officers and councillors were all aware of the fact that potentially vocal parents would resent the

curtailment of grammar school places in the private sector.

In general the role of parents in the decisions studied was to defend the selective system. The only exception to this was parental support for the comprehensive school in an area where there was no grammar school. But even there, parents did not initiate change; they accepted the comprehensive school in the first instance and later, when it was threatened, defended it. It could be said, therefore, that all organised parental pressure was in favour of conservation. Thus vocal or potentially vocal pressures exerted by parents were against change, were usually connected with access to grammar schools and prevented those comprehensive schools which were established from getting a balanced intake.

(ii)

Repeatedly it was emphasized that in making their choice of secondary school parents highly valued access to the fee-paying schools at public expense. Nearly one third of those whose children passed the eleven plus gave a fee-paying school as their first preference. This is only one example of the many ways in which the private and state sectors of education have been shown to be intimately inter-dependent.

The degree of inter-dependence varied from school to school. It was shown that fifteen fee-paying schools materially depended on the LEA in respect of pupil recruitment and for the financing of current and capital expenditure¹. The LEA, in turn, depended on these private schools for grammar school places for a minority of its pupils. Only 2% of all eleven-year olds for whom the LEA was responsible were annually sent to fee-paying schools. This 2%, however, represented 8% of the selective entry. The arrangements made for this minority had consequences for both sectors of education.

1. This included six direct grant schools which depended also on the direct grant from the DES. 75% of their current income is derived from public funds.

In the state sector, the LEA's freedom to formulate secondary schools policy and to change administrative practices was curtailed. The evidence showed this in at least four respects. Firstly, changes in selection procedure for transfer to secondary school were affected. The date of the County Tests was fixed to allow private schools to select their entrants from among applicants who had passed the eleven plus before allocation to maintained schools commenced for the remainder. Teachers repeatedly pressed for a later date, officers as frequently resisted such a change.

Secondly, potential developments in the Authority's own schools were restricted because double-creaming resulted in the academically brightest children being withdrawn from the state system. This leads to the third point. Curtailment of LEA-financed places in the fee-paying schools proved difficult even when the state system had grammar school vacancies.

Finally, attempts to introduce non-selective secondary schools with a balanced intake were undermined in a subtle way as a result of parental pressures on policy makers. Access to fee-paying grammar schools formed an integral part of the Authority's selective school system and parents who were academically ambitious for their children defended this system. Indeed, most of these parents regarded a fee-paying place as a prize. The esteem in which fee-paying schools were held tended to place them at the apex of the academic status hierarchy, followed by the maintained grammar schools. Some of the latter no doubt equalled the fee-paying schools in reputation and consequently attracted talent in the same way. But the secondary modern schools most definitely formed the base.

To turn now to the private sector, recruitment of LEA-financed pupils offered advantages beyond that of drawing fee-income from public funds. Applicants could be selected from among eleven plus passes over a wide catchment area. From the County's brightest children good academic results could be expected, enhancing the schools' academic reputation. High academic achievements made possible by this double-creaming of LEA pupils must have attracted parents who were academically ambitious for their children to send them as fee-payers to these private schools. Since fee-paying parents come from the higher social and economic sections of society, their children give such schools a high social status.

It is not known how many parents in Middlesex arranged for their

children to be educated privately, nor how many schools were involved in such arrangements in addition to those fifteen receiving 90% and the further ten or so receiving between them the remaining 10% of LEA-financed pupils. But it is known that especially among middle class parents and children there was widespread anxiety about the eleven plus. Many parents whose children failed to secure a selective school place through LEA channels opted out of the state sector if they could possibly afford to do so. It seems likely that the combination of high social and academic status enjoyed by the fifteen fee-paying schools with sizeable LEA contingents gave them a position of eminence within the private school sector. This probably enabled them to be selective in their recruitment of private fee-payers as well as in that of their LEA entrants.

It appears that the balance of advantage in this relationship of inter-dependence between private and state sector lies with the fee-paying schools. Why, then, did the LEA take fee-paying places? The cost of doing so was invariably higher per child than a place in a maintained school. Under the 1944 Education Act it is not a statutory requirement to use fee-paying schools if maintained school provision is sufficient. But there was in fact a shortage after the war. This was one reason why the LEA used fee-paying schools; the Authority's desire to extend parental choice of school was the second reason.

A certain relationship of dependency had been established between the County Council and the private schools before the war, and this relationship could not be changed easily or quickly. Indeed, two direct grant schools had been attracted to Middlesex to meet the rising demand for school places by substantial capital grants from the County Council in the 1930s. Had these schools not come to Middlesex, the County Council would have had to build schools of its own. The fact that some of the required secondary school places had before the war been provided by direct grant and independent schools, made the LEA dependent on these schools after the 1944 Act, at least for a time.

Arrangements were therefore made with direct grant and independent schools to take up a certain number of places to supplement maintained

provision. Initially the LEA paid full fees for all these places. In 1950 LEA powers were clarified and in 1953 an amending Act set a statutory limit to LEA free places at independent schools. This restriction did not apply to places at direct grant schools. It was made quite explicit that taking free places at independent schools was justified only when there was a shortage of maintained school places. Assisted places could, however, be offered even when no shortage existed, in order to extend parental choice. But a parental contribution assessed on an income scale was required towards the fees in these cases.

Since LEA fee-paying school places supplemented grammar school provision, it became necessary to define 'shortage' with reference to selective school places. The particular definition adopted by Middlesex resulted in two thirds of the free places at independent schools being converted into assisted ones in 1952. An immediate consequence of this was that parental demand dropped sharply. However, by 1958 some of the free places had been restored because of the acute shortage of school accommodation during entry of the post-war bulge into the secondary schools.

But in the early 1960s pupil numbers entering secondary schools declined. In addition the LEA had 1,000 more maintained grammar school places available than in the late 1940s as a result of its school building programme. The combination of these two factors meant that there was no longer a shortage of selective places, that the maintained grammar schools suffered more noticeably from creaming-off to the benefit of private schools, and that recently established extended courses in the modern schools were threatened.

Attempts to cut LEA fee-paying places in certain schools by as much as 50% in response to this situation and in accordance with the 1953 statutory requirements were resisted by the private schools, by Roman Catholics, by councillors and, in respect of the direct grant schools, by the Ministry of Education. After considerable delays only a 15% cut was made¹.

1. An article dealing with this decision appeared in the Winter 1967 issue of Public Administration under the title "Decision-Making by a Local Education Authority". A reprint of this article is bound with the thesis.

The LEA's dependency on the private sector, which had originated in shortage of maintained places, was in 1964 argued mainly on grounds of parental choice. It was added that the schools had come to depend on their Middlesex recruits. It is concluded, therefore, that in the 1960s parental wishes to have access to fee-paying grammar schools at public expense were respected at the expense of the ratepayer on the one hand and of the standard of work in maintained schools on the other. Further, those exercising this parental choice were parents of children who were selected for grammar school, or who hoped to be so selected. As it is now generally known that middle class children have a far better chance to go to grammar school than working class ones, it meant that minority wishes were respected to the disadvantage of the majority of children attending maintained schools.

It was stated at the beginning of this section that the inter-dependence between the state and private sectors had influenced the possibilities of change within the state sector. How far had the maintained secondary system in fact changed over the twenty years? This question leads to certain concluding comments.

* * * *

This study has observed in detail the process of change in the education system. What was the change?

The nation at war demanded social reform and greater equality in society. In response to these pressures, the Education Act was expected to translate the demand 'secondary education for all' into reality. The Act left open the precise pattern of secondary organisation. It was hoped that the secondary modern schools would develop along adventurous and experimental lines to meet the needs of the non-academic child and adolescent. Exciting curricula were to be developed free from the pressures and restrictions imposed by external examinations. The modern schools would be different from grammar schools but would enjoy equal status.

The evidence in this study shows that twenty years later 'equality

of status' for different types of secondary schools had not been achieved. The early post-war idealism had been dissipated. Parents, teachers, education officers and councillors all held grammar schools in higher esteem than the modern schools; instead of developing in an examination-free atmosphere, the secondary modern schools had started General Certificate of Education Ordinary and Advanced Level courses for their abler pupils. It was academic examination successes which raised the status and reputation of schools. Anxiety about the eleven plus was an indication of the highly competitive character of the educational system to which children were exposed. The hierarchical pyramid of the secondary system - private schools at the apex, maintained grammar schools in the middle, and secondary modern schools at the base - remained.

What was the net result of the Labour councillors attempt to change the selective schools system? They certainly did not change its essential features by 1964. Selection for grammar schools including fee-paying ones continued, even if by less formal methods. Only two comprehensive schools had been successfully established but parental opinion had prevented their securing a balanced intake. Elsewhere in the County non-selected pupils went to modern schools unless their parents opted out of the state system. The horror with which allocation to a modern school was greeted by many parents had abated somewhat where modern schools had developed extended courses.

The initiators of non-selective changes in school organisation cannot have been satisfied with these very meagre results. It is significant, however, that their efforts over the years contributed to a change in attitude especially among officers and teachers, the providers of the service, who were compelled to think more critically about eleven plus selection. The very fact that between 1946 and 1949 and again in 1958 attention was focussed on the controversial issue of comprehensive schools and eleven plus selection created a challenge which involved officers and teachers in devising new schemes, often somewhat against their personal inclination.

The last Chief Education Officer of Middlesex County Council, at the end of the period under review, voiced his own awareness of the dramatic

change in climate of opinion which had occurred:

"As a nation we have concentrated far too long on the education of too few of our ablest children. This is wrong on two counts, as a denial to the apparently less able child of the chance to develop his full potential, and as a form of economic suicide, through the wilful waste of latent human skills."¹

At the national level, similar thoughts were voiced by Sir Edward Boyle in the Foreword of Half our Future:

"The essential point is that all children should have an equal opportunity of acquiring intelligence, and of developing their talents and abilities to the full."²

These thoughts could be regarded as a reflection of one of Donnison's conclusions, that

"... a social service may be 'efficient' without being effectively attuned to the needs of the times."³

If this is accepted, the important question remains from what sources does the dynamic for change spring. Donnison holds the view that it is the providers who initiate change. This study has shown that the process is much more complex. The impetus for change does not come from any single group in society. Changes in administrative practice are closely related to changes in public opinion. Indeed, these two factors reinforce each other.

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1. Dr. C.E. Gurr, Primary and Secondary Education in Middlesex 1900-1965, p.67.
 2. Half our Future (Newsom Report), HMSO, 1963.
 3. D.V. Donnison, op.cit., p.253.

Table

Decisions Studied

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Initiator(s)</u>	<u>Attempts to Block/Modify Decision</u>	<u>Result</u>	<u>Crucial Policy Maker(s)</u>	<u>Degree of Consensus or Conflict</u>
<u>No. 1:</u> Adoption of Comprehensive School Policy 1946.	Labour Councillors (CEO instructed prepare report based on comprehensive principle)	1. CEO advised 'contracting out' for grammar schools. 2. No vote cast against policy. 3. Joint Four criticised Middlesex policy; opposed small comprehensive schools because of effect on sixth form work. 4. Ministry referred Development Plan Sect. Small comprehensives would endanger sixth form work.	Councillors decided to associate grammar schools from start. Policy abandoned after CC elections and change of political control.	Labour Councillors Ministry	Councillors and Officers were in disagreement.
<u>No. 2:</u> Adoption of Grammar/Modern School Policy 1949.	Conservative Councillors (CEO instructed prepare report on tripartite & bipartite principle)	1. Labour Councillors voted against. 2. Ministry approved Development Plan with reservations on technical education.	CEO's policy for bipartite pattern adopted.	Officers	Officers and Conservative Councillors were in agreement.
<u>No. 3:</u> Establishment of Comprehensive Schools 1948.	Labour Councillors (insisted on inclusion 1 grammar school when officers advised on particular schools)	1. Officers advised against rushed plans. CEO persuaded Labour Councillors try experiment on less extensive scale. 2. Minister permitted 2, under pressure 3, schools. Specified conditions under which experiment should be tried. 3. Joint Four and parents opposed grammar school scheme. NOT one area supported, other area uneasy about proposals.	Schools discussed reduced from 12 to 6. 3 comprehensive schools started. Schemes opposed by teachers/parents were among those dropped.	Labour Councillors Officers Ministry Teachers & Parents	Labour Councillors and Officers were in disagreement.
<u>No. 4:</u> Abolition of formal 11+ 1958.	Labour Councillors insisted alternative arrangements made. CEO instructed prepare scheme.	1. Conservative Councillors voted against. 2. CEO opposed revolutionary change in selection procedure. 3. Teachers opposed change in a ballot.	Modified Selection Procedure introduced 1960.	Labour Councillors Officers Teachers	Labour Councillors were in conflict with officers and majority of teachers.
<u>No. 5:</u> Development Extended Courses in Modern Schools 1958.	Labour Councillors	1. Conservative Councillors accepted this policy but were concerned lest grammar schools were touched. 2. Some Divisional Executives tried to use policy to submit comprehensive schemes for inclusion in building programme. 3. Minister would not accept for inclusion in building programme any proposals involving discontinuation of grammar school.	General Policy Accepted	Labour Councillors Ministry	Labour Councillors avoided conflict with Ministry.

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Initiator(s)</u>	<u>Attempts to Block/Modify Decision</u>	<u>Result</u>	<u>Crucial Policy Maker(s)</u>	<u>Degree of Consensus or Conflict</u>
No. 6: LEA Places in Rec-Paying Schools; a) Schools shall be used and places free 1945. b) Applicants to reach LL+ qualifying standard 1949 c) Definition of 'Shortage' & introduction Assisted Places at Independent Schools 1950-51.	CBO Ministry CBO		a) Councillors accepted Chairman/Vice-Chairman to negotiate places with schools. b) Councillors accepted with minor exceptions. c) Councillors accepted CEO's definition of shortage. § free places at Independent Schools converted into assisted places.	Officers Officers Officers	Councillors accepted the leadership of their officers until early 1960s. Then conflict arose between officers on the one hand and councillors, the Ministry, and RC representatives on the other.
d) Number of places to be cut by half (except RC places, where shift from free to assisted only) 1960-63.	CEO Divisional Education Officers	1.Schools pleaded for less severe cuts. 2.RCs made representations. Chairman received deputation and then proposed modifications. 3.Ministry pleaded with CEO for delay and less severe cuts for Direct Grant Schools. CEO proposed less severe cuts. 4.Councillors wanted to increase number of independent school places.	d) Places cut by 15% instead of 50%. RC Schools retained most of their free places.	Officers RC Authorities Education Committee Chairman Councillors Ministry	
No. 7:					
a) MCC Capital Grant to School B as a Direct Grant School 1930-37.	School Governors applied to move School from London to Middx. 1930.	1.LCC opposed removal of School from London	Board of Education refused permission.	School Governors MCC Officers MEC Chairman LCC Board of Education	
	School Governors applied again & proposed conditions for capital grant 1934.	1.Officers proposed stricter conditions for capital grant from Middx.County Council. 2.Board of Education: in event of repayment, this should be at current valuation.	Councillors and School Governors accepted conditions. Board of Education Order authorised capital grant and new buildings.	School Governors MCC Officers MEC Chairman Board of Education	
b) Repayment of Capital Grant from School B as Independent School. 1945-52.	School Governors decided to become independent; asked Ministry and MCC to be excused repayment of grant.	1.Ministry tried persuade School to remain Direct Grant. 2.Ministry held School not liable repay grant if School in fact accepted direct grant status obligations. 3.Ministry stated no repayment possible without further Order of Minister. 4.County Treasurer, CEO and Councillors insisted on repayment. Clerk of CC proposed compromise.	Variation Order for repayment made by Ministry of Education at original (not current) valuation.	School Governors Ministry MCC Officers Chairmen of Education & Finance Committees	Middlesex County Council was in conflict with the Ministry and School Governors.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX AMethod of WorkThe Decision-Making Process

Much of the decision-making process in public life is not open to scrutiny by outside observers at the time when important decisions are made. A study in depth undertaken subsequently cannot hope to clear up all the imponderables, but it can nevertheless contribute to an understanding of how decisions are reached by throwing light on the process. Some insight is better than none in such an important field. The only other way insight may be gained is by hearing or reading the accounts of particular participants. These may be one-sided.

Certain methods were developed in this study which may assist independent researchers interested in pursuing similar investigations either in education or other areas of public policy.

The Committee and Sub-Committee Minutes of the local education authority record actual decisions. From these a few decisions of particular interest to the author were selected for study in depth. Some decisions were selected because it was known that all the background documentation was available. Initially all relevant material concerning such a decision was collected from as many sources as possible. These sources included committee and sub-committee minutes of the local education authority, both at County and divisional level, minutes of the National Union of Teachers County organisation, local newspapers, books on the history of particular schools, files of the local education authority. The source material was then put into chronological order, and entered on a decision-making time chart showing the precise sequence of events leading up to the decision. The chart showed at a glance who among the participants were involved and possessed relevant information at any particular point in time. Interviews were then undertaken during which certain unexplained points in the decision-making process were elucidated. Only by this combination of written and oral

evidence was it in some cases possible to discover the particular role certain participants had played in the making of decisions.

The War-Time Debates on Education

The debates on the 1943 White Paper on Educational Reconstruction and on the 1944 Education Bill were analysed with particular reference to views held on the school-leaving age, selection for and transfer to secondary schools, parity of conditions for different types of secondary schools, the independence of school governors and retention of fees in direct grant schools. Some war-time pamphlet literature on education was also examined¹ with reference to the same issues.

It was thought likely that these issues would continue to be of importance once the 1944 Act came to be implemented. It was through this process of detailed analysis that it was, for example, discovered that the Coalition Government probably changed its mind about fees in direct grant schools between 1943 and 1944. Insight into this sensitive and controversial issue during the war led the author to pay particular attention to the role of the direct grant schools as part of the local education authority's secondary schools' system when Middlesex sources were subsequently examined. The evidence which then gradually accumulated led to the conclusion that the direct grant schools should be treated as part of the private sector despite the high public subsidy given them. This in turn led to questions about dependency of the independent schools on the state.

Sources

The most valuable source for giving depth to the study, to supplement Committee Minutes, were certain files of the former Middlesex Education Department. These gave one insight into informal consultations among Education Officers in the County; between the LEA's officers and the

1. The DES Library has an excellent bound collection of such pamphlets.

Ministry spokesmen; between officers and school governors; between the Chief Education Officer and the Chairman of the Education Committee; between officers and teacher representatives.

A second valuable source was the Register of Educational Charities, which appears to be little known for this type of research. The information available there about individual schools was most valuable in those cases where it could be combined with knowledge acquired from other sources either at the County Record Office or from published histories. For any registered foundation school it is possible to see the School's original and amending schemes, orders authorising capital expenditure with precise details of cost and methods of finance, and the registered charity's accounts. There seems some doubt about accessibility of individual school accounts, although those for three schools were seen by the author.

APPENDIX BBibliographyI. MIDDLESEX COUNTY COUNCIL (MCC)A. Original SourcesReference used
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Joint Consultative Committee for Primary & Secondary Education 1946-1957	JCC/Date.
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(b) Local LevelSouth West Middlesex

Interim Education Committee 1945	
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Potters Bar

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Files School B

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Files School C

File on School I.

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B etc.

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 MCC Labour Group 1946-1964:
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No names are mentioned in order to protect anonymity. In the text, pseudonyms have been used for people interviewed who are referred to frequently. Interviews usually lasted at least one hour, in several cases a few hours. Some people were interviewed more than once. Between 1965-67 a total of 25 people were interviewed (in addition, correspondence was conducted with 3 other councillors).

Councillors and Aldermen	12	(6 Conservative, 6 Labour).
Officers	4	(Former CEO, Deputy CEO, 2 Divisional Education Officers)
Teacher Representatives	6	(3 Primary, 1 Secondary Modern, 1 Grammar, NUT Divisional Sec.)
Governors of Schools	1	
Local Newspaper Editor	1	
Other	1	

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Decision-Making by a Local Education Authority

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There are few detailed accounts of how decisions are made by local education authorities (L.E.A.s). This case study,¹ which extends over the period 1960 to 1963, deals with the decision taken in 1963 by what was then the country's second largest L.E.A. to reduce the number of secondary school places purchased by them in direct grant and independent schools.

The majority of secondary school day pupils for whom L.E.A.s are responsible² attend maintained schools, but a small minority are sent as L.E.A.-financed pupils to fee-paying schools. Middlesex L.E.A. exercised its statutory powers each year to buy school places in the private sector for approximately 2 per cent. of all its eleven-year-olds. This meant that between 500-560 out of a total of between 26,000 and 30,000 eleven-year-old school children were in most years sent to schools other than those maintained by the L.E.A. During the '50's the authority increased its provision of places in maintained grammar schools in order to meet the increased demands arising from the population bulge, and towards the end of this period found that it had sufficient grammar school places in the maintained sector. Accordingly it sought to reduce the number of places taken up in the private sector.

In 1963, after nearly three years of discussion and consultation, the number of children placed in fee-paying schools was cut from 556 (1962 quota) to 496 (1964 quota). On the face of it this was a minor matter, affecting a mere sixty potential applicants for fee-paying school places per year. But it raised important issues and provides a good opportunity for examining the manner in which such decisions are made. The interaction between the L.E.A., the Ministry and the affected interests is important, and there were significant differences of approach within the L.E.A. between officers and

¹The evidence in this article forms part of a Ph.D. Thesis on 'Secondary Education Policy and Administration in Middlesex since 1944' to be submitted to London University. In addition to the Education Committee and relevant Sub-committee minutes, certain other records of the former Middlesex Education Department were used.

²This excludes pupils whose parents have placed them in private schools as fee-payers. About the numbers of such pupils in a particular area there is little published information.

elected representatives over the application of the complex legal provisions governing the authority's policy. In addition, after making a broader study of secondary education in Middlesex, the author has formed the opinion that private school placements for children over eleven were more important and influential in relation to secondary education as a whole than first impressions might suggest. This case study was one attempt to test a general hypothesis about the inter-dependence of the state and private school sectors.

INTERPRETATION OF STATUTORY POWERS

Under the 1944 Education Act, an L.E.A. has the duty to secure that there shall be sufficient schools in its area. The schools available are not deemed to be sufficient

'unless they are sufficient in number, character and equipment to afford for all pupils opportunities for education offering such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of their different ages, abilities, and aptitudes, and of different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school, including practical instruction and training appropriate to their respective needs.'¹

It would seem, then, that an L.E.A. with sufficient schools of its own has no need to buy fee-paying places in either direct grant² or independent schools. Yet such places were awarded to some children who had passed the L.E.A.'s eleven-plus selection test. Since the cost of doing this is invariably higher per child than a place in a maintained school, it is of interest to know why L.E.A.s spend public money in this way. One reason is shortage of school places in the maintained sector; the authority's desire to extend parental choice of school is another. The fact that fee-paying places formed part of the *grammar* school provision of the L.E.A. is crucial in examining these two criteria.

To take parental choice first, only children eligible for grammar school had the chance of securing a fee-paying place. Almost a third of the parents whose children passed the eleven-plus gave a fee-paying school as their first preference, followed by two maintained grammar schools. This illustrates the prestige many parents attached to a school place outside the state sector and their appreciation of such an extension of parental choice. Actual admissions to fee-paying schools were decided not by the L.E.A., but by the heads of particular schools, who received from the authority – before maintained grammar school placements were made – the names of all children who had passed the eleven-plus and whose parents had listed the

¹Education Act, 1944, Section 8(1)(b).

²In this article, the direct grant schools are treated as part of the private sector of education. This needs justification, as they are sometimes considered an integral part of the state sector, and as 75 per cent. of their current income comes from public funds. The evidence clearly shows, however, that L.E.A. placements in direct grant are in many respects similar to those made in independent schools.

school as their first preference. The fee-paying school heads thus had the first pick of the brightest children over a wide catchment area.

As regards the second criterion, a definition of 'shortage' in relation to grammar school places was not arrived at until the early 1950's. Pre-war, part of the L.E.A.'s provision for grammar school children had been in direct grant and independent schools, so the authority could ill afford to lose these places immediately after the war. Indeed, in 1945 the Education Committee empowered its Chairman and Vice-Chairman to negotiate with the governors of certain direct grant schools the maximum quota of places under the new Direct Grant Schools Regulations.¹ These required direct grant schools to put up to half their places in the upper school at the disposal of the L.E.A., if the authority so desired. If the governors agreed, the L.E.A. could secure an even higher proportion. As a result the three direct grant schools situated in Middlesex recruited around 50 per cent. of their pupils through the Middlesex Education Committee, and another three close to the border of the county – which admitted L.C.C.-sponsored pupils as well – recruited between 25-45 per cent. from Middlesex. For all these places, whether *free* or *reserved*,² the L.E.A. paid the full fees, parents making no financial contribution.

Until 1952 the Middlesex Education Committee also paid full fees for all its pupils placed in independent schools. In that year, however, due to clarification of the statutory position in a Ministry of Education Manual of Guidance,³ a distinction was drawn between *free* and *assisted* places at independent schools, parents contributing to fees on an income scale for the latter.⁴ The Manual defined more closely the powers of L.E.A.s to pay fees for pupils at independent schools. It pointed out that parental choice under Section 76 of the 1944 Act was limited by the requirement to avoid unreasonable public expenditure, and stressed that, by and large, school

¹S.R. & O. 1945, No. 636, Part IV. Later revised Regulations left unchanged the conditions for admission of pupils.

²Under the Regulations, 25 per cent. of the previous year's intake must be given *free* places – full remission of fees to be financed by the L.E.A., by an endowed foundation or by the governors. Pupils qualify for *free* places only if they have attended a grant-aided primary school for at least two years. As preparatory departments of direct grant schools are not eligible for grant-aid, pupils in them cannot be considered for *free* places unless they have received at least two years of their primary education in a maintained school.

If the L.E.A. desires places beyond the quota of free places, the governors of the school have to offer a maximum of another 25 per cent. as *reserved* places, or more, if authority and governors agree. *Reserved* places are open to pupils irrespective of the school previously attended.

The remaining *residuary* places in a direct grant school are filled by the governors from among applicants whose parents are prepared to pay fees. Parents may apply for remission of fees on an income scale. The Department of Education and Science (D.E.S.) reimburses the school with the difference between the approved fees and the amount actually paid by parents.

³Manual of Guidance, Schools No. 1. *Choice of Schools*. 23 August 1950. H.M.S.O. Reprinted, with minor amendments, in September 1960, this Manual still represents D.E.S. policy.

⁴*Assisted* places at independent schools are, therefore, similar to *residuary* places at direct grant schools. In the one case the L.E.A. supplements parental payment of fees, in the other the D.E.S. does so. Both cover 'hardship' cases, and remission is given on an income scale.

places in the maintained sector and in accessible direct grant schools should suffice to give effect to parents' wishes. Only when there were 'deficiencies of an *educational* character'¹ were L.E.A. *free* places at independent schools justified. Later, this clarification was embodied in the 1953 Education Act, which contained the word 'shortage'. An L.E.A. could pay full fees at independent schools only when² '... the authority are satisfied that by reason of shortage of places in schools maintained by them and ... by another L.E.A. ...' was it necessary to educate the pupil at an independent school.

The Manual also dealt with *assisted* places at independent schools. These could be made available to widen parental choice of school³ by the exercise of powers under Section 81 of the 1944 Education Act, even when the provision of free places was precluded. But under this Section, which covered cases of hardship, the authority could do no more than assist parents to meet fees at an independent school.

THE ELUSIVE CONCEPT OF 'SHORTAGE'

Without a definition of 'shortage', it was now impossible for the L.E.A. to determine how many free and assisted places at independent schools should be offered. How, then, was 'shortage' of grammar school places in the maintained sector to be defined? This question received the attention of officers and of the Committee in 1950-1⁴ after the Manual of Guidance had appeared. The Chief Education Officer (C.E.O.) presented a very detailed report on grammar school provision in the county and advised the Committee on future policy. If the Committee held that too high a proportion of Middlesex children were placed in grammar schools, it would have to conclude that no 'shortage' of places existed. A cut of a mere 1 per cent. in the proportion was enough to eliminate all the L.E.A.-financed independent school places.

Clearly it was no easy matter to judge what was the right proportion of children to receive a grammar school education. Opinion among officers and councillors in Middlesex had always been that 'the general intellectual quality of Middlesex children is high by national standards and, therefore, ... it is reasonable that the provision of grammar school places should be above the national average'.⁵

Thus 25 per cent. as compared with a national average of 20 per cent. was accepted as approximately the right proportion, despite the fact that some children failed to complete the grammar school course or to pass the school certificate examination.

¹Manual of Guidance, para. 16.

²1953 Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, Section 6, (2)(a)(ii).

³Manual of Guidance, para. 18.

⁴Minutes, Schools Sub-committee, No. 6 & 7, meetings 14 December 1950 and 1 November 1951.

⁵Minutes, Schools Sub-committee, No. 25, Mtg. 20 February 1962, C.E.O.'s report.

DECISION-MAKING BY A LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY

Within this broad framework of 25 per cent., the Education Committee accepted in 1951 that 'shortage' for any particular area in the county be assessed on the basis of the number of children who reached the county qualifying mark¹ in the eleven-plus examination, plus one-third for marginal candidates.² This number was set against the number of grammar school places – including county-sponsored places at fee-paying schools – actually at the disposal of any of the five zones into which the county was divided. On this basis, as from 1952, children in two zones were debarred from securing *free* places at independent schools because there was in those zones a 'surplus' of grammar school places. A Divisional Executive in one of the zones immediately protested. Parents were, however, able to apply for the *assisted* places, awarded for the first time that year. The total number of places offered was left unchanged, but only one-third were now free, two-thirds assisted. Introduction of an income scale for the assisted places resulted in a decline of parental demand. A graph on page 000 shows the sharp reduction in places actually taken up.

During the policy review of 1950-1 which led to this drop, neither the schools nor parents were consulted by the Education Committee. The affected independent schools soon made their view felt. Year after year approaches were made to the C.E.O., offering the Committee additional places, preferably free ones. By 1958 total L.E.A. recruitment to independent schools had risen to the former level, and over two-thirds of the places were free, under one-third assisted. Within six years the Committee had virtually reversed the decision governing the 1952 L.E.A. entry to independent schools. The fact that the post-war population bulge was moving into the secondary schools during these years gave support to the argument that 'shortage' of grammar school places in the maintained sector existed and that therefore more places (particularly free ones) were justified.

FIFTY PER CENT CUT PROPOSED

Ten years later, between 1960-3, both direct grant and independent school places financed by the L.E.A. came under scrutiny. It is the decision made at this time which will be examined here. By the late 1950's, the L.E.A.'s school building programme had increased the number of grammar school places in the maintained sector at the very time when, after the year of peak entry in 1958, numbers transferred from primary to secondary schools were declining. Maintained grammar school places were being filled by less able pupils than hitherto. The expense of buying L.E.A. places in fee-paying schools became an important consideration in these circumstances.

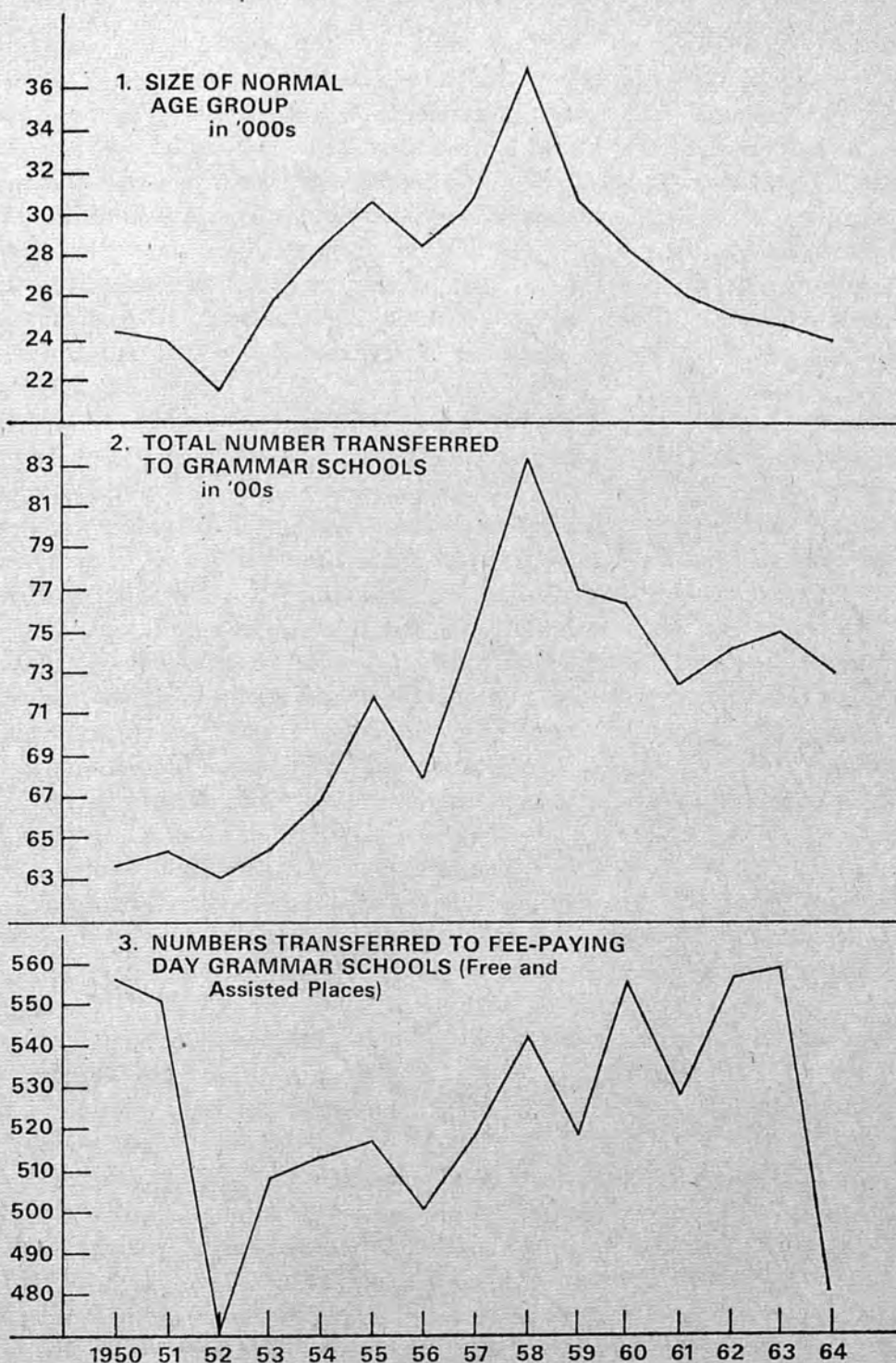
In this new situation, L.E.A. officers first tried to curtail fee-paying placements by administrative measures. The difficulties they encountered

¹Any particular qualifying mark was quite arbitrary.

²The proportion of one-third is equally arbitrary.

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SECONDARY SCHOOL TRANSFERS MIDDLESEX L.E.A.—1950-1964



This graph has been compiled from figures taken year by year from Middlesex Schools Sub-committee minutes. It should be noted that part 3 of the graph includes both free and assisted places. Figures published by H.M.S.O. in List 69 (% of 13-year olds in fee paying schools at L.E.A.-expense) do not include assisted places.

increased when specific proposals were placed before the Education Committee. The officers suggested that L.E.A. places at direct grant schools and at non-denominational independent schools should be cut by 50 per cent. The total at Roman Catholic (R.C.) independent schools was to remain the same as there was a shortage of R.C. places in maintained schools. But for both R.C. and the remaining independent schools there was also to be a shift back from *free* to *assisted places*. During discussions and consultations, pressures were brought to bear to minimize the proposed cuts and eventually places were cut by 15 per cent. only. The shift from free to assisted places was also minimized, especially for the R.C. independent schools.

The result of the decision is shown in the graph on page 000 in relation to total numbers transferred to grammar schools and the size of the normal age group, covering the years 1950-64. It will be noted that whereas the age group and total grammar school transfers reached their peak in 1958, the number of pupils placed in fee-paying schools reached its all time peak only in 1963, the 1958-63 trend continuing to be in an upward direction.

The actual number of fee-paying schools concerned in this review in the early 1960's was twenty-five. Six were direct grant, nineteen were independent schools. At the same time, in 1961, 90 per cent. of L.E.A.-placed pupils went to fifteen fee-paying schools: six direct grant, six non-denominational independent and three (R.C.) independent schools. These fifteen schools, therefore, were the ones where the cut in Middlesex places would in the main be felt. The remaining ten schools each had very small numbers of Middlesex L.E.A. admissions.

So much for the actual decision. How was it reached? As early as 1958, the C.E.O. had drawn the attention of the Schools Sub-Committee to the need to re-examine supplementation of maintained grammar school places:

'It might be considered . . . that now that the peak year of secondary pupils has passed into the schools, the list of additional places should be drastically revised and that all additional places should be "assisted" rather than "free".'¹

During 1960 and 1961 the issue remained at officer level. Middlesex had a two-tier structure for education: certain powers were delegated under schemes of divisional administration to twenty Divisional Executives. Each of these had its own Education Officer, who was, however, employed by the county council. Although the eleven-plus examination was organized by the Middlesex Education Committee for the county as a whole, the actual placement of eleven-year-old children in maintained grammar schools was under the direction of Divisional Education Officers. There was a varying degree of co-operation between Education Officers within each of the five zones into which the county was divided, since maintained grammar school places were pooled within each zone.

¹Minutes, Schools Sub-committee, No. 19, Mtg. 18 November 1958, C.E.O.'s Report.

Fee-paying placements, on the other hand, were handled by the C.E.O.'s staff at county level. The number of L.E.A.-sponsored fee-paying places annually taken up in relation to total grammar school provision was a matter for county decision and was now reviewed at officers' meetings which were held regularly for all the Divisional Education Officers and leading members of the C.E.O.'s staff. The officers' meeting had set up certain small panels or sub-committees, one of which dealt with all aspects of secondary school transfers.

In the summer of 1960, the panel on secondary school transfers made it clear that the question of reduction in independent school places should be discussed by the officers' meeting as soon as possible. The panel had already decided that, if possible, Form AS2¹ should in future include a warning of the possible dangers of selecting an independent school. From the sources it is not certain what 'dangers' were meant – possibly the fact that if parents were offered an assisted place at an independent school, they would be liable to contribute to fees, and to pay travelling expenses. The existing form actually gave ample warning about this. At a subsequent panel meeting it was explained by a senior county officer that the 'question of the inclusion or deletion of individual schools from AS2 was an administrative arrangement'. Presumably the officer had in mind that the names of certain schools might simply be omitted from the form, thus reducing parental options for them. Reductions might initially be made in independent rather than direct grant schools, 'where costs are equivalent to our own maintained schools'.² The meeting agreed after much discussion that when the layout of AS2 was reviewed in the following year, availability of independent and direct grant school places should be played down. Evidently the whole topic was a delicate one even among officers, for it was suggested that only 'guarded reference' should be made to the panel's discussion when a report was given to the full officers' meeting.

In April 1961 a much more detailed case was argued before all the county's Education Officers by one of their number. Discussion among officers in one of the five zones had preceded this. Extra grammar school places had become available through the building programme, and through two previously independent R.C. grammar schools becoming maintained voluntary aided schools. Classes in the zone could now be reduced from thirty-three or thirty-four to the prescribed thirty. The time had come to dispense with places in direct grant and independent grammar schools. If these or similar measures were not adopted, undesirable consequences would ensue. First, pupils unlikely to benefit from a grammar school course as at present envisaged would be admitted to such schools, resulting in lower standards. Secondly, the growth of varied and extended courses in secon-

¹Form AS2 was distributed by the L.E.A. to parents with children in their last year at the primary school. On this form parents stated their preference for three modern and three grammar schools.

²This is not the case when the Ministry of Education's 'direct' grant to the schools is added to the fees which are payable by the L.E.A.

dary modern schools would be checked. These had been developed to meet the needs of pupils of good but not outstanding ability, or with more diverse aptitudes, and such pupils would no longer be in the secondary modern schools. Indeed, the development of seven-year courses in modern schools might be endangered.

In December 1961, the C.E.O. gave his Education Officers relevant information in a detailed report. Figures were included showing the decline in numbers of eleven-year-old children, the number of pupils placed in 'external'¹ grammar schools, how many were taken by individual schools and in which area of the county they resided. The authority's obligations under Section 6 of the 1953 Act and under Section 81 of the 1944 Act were also outlined. He concluded that:

- (1) Middlesex ratepayers valued opportunities afforded by free and assisted places for able pupils at a wide range of schools.
- (2) Cancellation or drastic cuts 'might have a serious or even catastrophic effect' on many fee-paying schools whose recruitment was based on a large Middlesex contingent.
- (3) The schools would have to accustom themselves to variations in admissions as 1958 conditions were likely to recur, necessitating supplementation of maintained places.

An Officers' Meeting agreed that '... despite the difficulties ... there should be some restriction of present quotas of places'. Officers were also asked to submit to the C.E.O. their individual views.

At least seven did so early in 1962: one strongly favoured a large cut in places because there were vacancies at county selective schools; another wanted the authority to take only free, but not reserved places at direct grant schools and to cut assisted ones at independent schools; officers from two areas pointed to their continued need for additional places because the size of classes exceeded the prescribed number, or because it was still not possible to place all qualified children in maintained grammar schools. One officer thought opposition in his area would be considerable if places eagerly sought by parents were severely curtailed. It became apparent later that 17 per cent. of this borough's grammar school children were placed in fee-paying and out-county schools, at a time when the maintained grammar schools in the area had acute pupil recruitment difficulties.

REACTIONS TO PROPOSED CUTS

So far only the officers had taken part in the discussions. Elected members became involved between February 1962 and March 1963. There were five meetings of the Schools Sub-committee, one of a three-member ad-hoc sub-committee, two of the Education Committee and one of the County Council, at which reduction of L.E.A. fee-paying places was on the agenda. In

¹All schools not maintained by Middlesex, i.e. fee-paying schools whether inside or outside the county, and out-county maintained schools (L.C.C.).

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between there were consultations between the C.E.O. on the one hand and the County Treasurer, the Chairman of the Education Committee, the schools, the R.C. authorities and the Ministry of Education on the other. It is not possible to describe in full the views expressed at every stage, and how these gradually modified the proposed cuts. The original proposals and how these were ultimately amended can best be made clear in a table.

QUOTA OF L.E.A. PLACES IN DIRECT GRANT AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

(Cuts Proposed in April 1962 and Cuts finally accepted in 1963)

	Existing Quota	C.E.O.'s Suggested Cuts* as put before Sub-Committee of three April 1962		Modified Cuts accepted by CC February 1963
		1962	1963	
<i>Free Places</i>				
Direct Grant	1962	1963	1964	1964
Independent:	265	188	122	225
Non-Denominational	85	44	23	55
Roman Catholic	79	47	21	63
Total Free	429	279	166	343
<i>Assisted Places</i>				
Independent:				
Non-Denominational	48	53	47	58
Roman Catholic	79	111	137	95
Total Assisted	127	164	184	153
Grand Total	556	443	350	496
<i>Per cent. Cut on 1962 Quota</i>		%	%	%
Direct Grant		29.9	54.0	15.1
Independent:				
Non-Denominational		27.1	47.4	15.1
Roman Catholic**		—	—	—
All Fee-Paying Schools		20.3	37.0	10.8

*Figures for three schools have been omitted from these two columns in order to include only those schools which were still under discussion at the end of negotiations. Otherwise the original and final cuts would not be comparable. Source for figures: Minutes, Schools Sub-committee, No. 25, 26 June 1962 & No. 26, 23 October 1962.

**For R.C. schools only a shift from free to assisted places was proposed throughout the discussions, never a cut in the total number of places. Ultimately only sixteen of the seventy-nine free places were made assisted.

Whenever the Schools Sub-committee considered the matter, the C.E.O.'s guidance on the statutory position was given. His reports pointed out that Middlesex now had 6,600 maintained grammar school places, whereas 5,750 places were sufficient to admit 25 per cent. of the age group to such schools. The consequences of this situation for the county's own grammar and modern schools were shown.

The majority of officers accepted the necessity for substantial cuts after a further round of consultations at zonal meetings. Proposals were then prepared by the C.E.O.'s staff amended by the C.E.O., submitted for approval

to the Chairman of the Education Committee, and presented to the sub-committee of three which accepted them. Cuts to be made in 1963 and 1964, amounting to a total of 50 per cent., are shown in the accompanying table. Special consideration was to be given to the R.C. schools because of the demand for such places.

The fee-paying schools were consulted next. Most expressed regret and concern about the proposed cuts. Some non-denominational independent schools stressed their long association with Middlesex and asked for less severe cuts. R.C. independent schools all pleaded for reconsideration of the proposals – parents, they added, did not readily apply for assisted places. The individual schools' distress was taken up by the R.C. diocesan authorities, who based their opposition on Section 76 of the 1944 Act. In the end the Chairman of the Education Committee received an R.C. deputation and amended proposals agreed between them were endorsed by the Schools Sub-committee in October.

The direct grant schools also pressed their case. It was hoped the L.E.A. would at least continue taking the 25 per cent. free places. This plea was reinforced by the Ministry of Education in an exchange of views between the C.E.O.'s and the Ministry's representatives in May. The Ministry stated that no objections could in principle be raised, as the decision about direct grant school places lay with the L.E.A. It was also appreciated that the proposals arose on account of the financial advantages gained by keeping the maintained grammar school entry at normal level. Nevertheless, the Ministry spokesman pleaded for as much latitude as possible in implementing the proposed cuts at direct grant schools, both with a view to easing the problems of the schools concerned and to reducing parental discontent, much of which found its way to the Ministry. The first plea, that as much notice as possible be given of the reductions, was met by the authority's proposal to spread the cuts equally over 1963 and 1964. If they could be delayed a little longer, so much the better. The difficulty for the schools was that a reduction which left them with less than 25 per cent. of their entry taken up by the L.E.A.s in the form of free places – that was, pupils with a primary school qualification – meant that the school governors had to make up the free places to 25 per cent. That in turn meant the admission of additional suitably qualified pupils without payment of fees, which entailed an annual loss of income which had to be made good in some way. Generally the only way to do this was to raise the tuition fees, a thing nobody liked to do. It would therefore be most helpful to the schools if the axe fell primarily on the reserved rather than on the free places.

Following these representations, the C.E.O. reassured the Ministry spokesman that the L.E.A. looked upon the direct grant schools as part of the state provision of schools. It would remain the authority's policy to offer parents freedom of choice over as wide a field as possible, and to avoid harming the direct grant schools. These same views were incorporated into the C.E.O.'s next report to the Schools Sub-committee,

although he made no reference to the fact that exchanges with the Ministry had taken place. The C.E.O. still concluded that it would be 'improper to allow an undue proportion of "empty" places in the maintained schools . . .'¹

MODIFIED PROPOSALS WITHDRAWN

The C.E.O. had to pay attention to the comments of the schools and was certainly impressed by his consultations with the Ministry. In the light of these he proposed less severe cuts for direct grant and non-denominational independent schools, to be implemented over three instead of two years. By 1965 places would have been cut by a total of 34 per cent. instead of by 50 per cent. As far as the R.C. independent schools were concerned, the proposed shift from free to assisted places was left almost as before, but its impact would have been less sudden. Without explanation, these amended proposals were withdrawn by the Chairman of the Schools Sub-committee in June. The available evidence allows no conclusion as to whether the withdrawal occurred primarily because of the aggrieved reactions of the R.C. schools and authorities. What is known is that subsequently – in October – the Chairman of the Education Committee received an R.C. deputation, and that the C.E.O. on the day following withdrawal of the report consulted the County Treasurer about the financial implications in law of *taking additional free places* at independent schools. This suggests that the Chairman and/or some councillors, who were concerned about the effect on either the R.C. or all independent schools, proposed an increase in independent school places, although *cuts* were then under discussion because of vacancies in state schools.

The County Treasurer drew attention (as had the C.E.O.) to the proviso that free places at independent schools were justified only when 'shortage' of maintained school places existed, and to Section 76 which referred to 'the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure'. He produced detailed estimates from which it was apparent that on the modified cuts at that stage proposed for 1963-5, the authority would save, after five years, between £60,000 – £70,000 per annum. He also showed that assisted places at independent schools cost the authority, on average, 75 per cent., parents 25 per cent., of the fees. The offsetting cost of educating pupils in maintained schools instead would not be great since pupils would be spread over many schools in various areas. These views and figures were made known to the Education Committee Chairman during the summer.

Withdrawal of the modified proposals delayed matters for a few months. In October the Schools Sub-committee accepted them, except that two further amendments of substance were suggested by the Chairman of the Education Committee and agreed. Firstly, concessions were made to the

¹Minutes, Schools Sub-committee, No. 25, Mtg. 26 June 1962.

R.C. schools as a result of their deputation to the Chairman. Their quota of free places stood at seventy-nine. Instead of fifty-eight of these being converted into assisted places, only sixteen were so converted. This left the R.C. schools with sixty-three free places instead of a mere twenty-one. Secondly, only the first stage of the proposed reductions was to be implemented, and that not until 1964, so as to allow adequate time for notice to schools and parents. This meant that direct grant and non-denominational independent schools would be subject to a one-time cut of 15 per cent. instead of an ultimate one of 34 per cent.

When these new Sub-committee recommendations were put before the full Education Committee, a further delay occurred. The Education Committee refused to follow its Sub-committee and decided to ask the Sub-committee to reconsider the proposals. The reference back of the Sub-committee report was moved by a Labour councillor and carried by twenty-five to twelve votes. Clearly the controlling party (Conservative at this time) did not carry the day. Some evidence suggests a degree of cross-party voting at this stage. On the full Education Committee political pressures could be brought to bear more effectively. Both party groups on the County Council contained some R.C. members, and it is likely that Conservative R.C. councillors voted for the Labour motion.

The reference back was argued on 'means test' grounds (which would appeal generally to Labour councillors). It was the shift in the proportion of free to assisted places at independent schools to which exception was taken. Parents were liable to contribute not merely to fees, but also to pay travelling expenses and school meals, if their child secured an assisted place. A child's transfer to secondary school should not be governed by its parents' financial circumstances, argued Labour opponents.

When the Schools Sub-committee reconsidered its own recommendations, the party whips were probably put on. In any case, the same recommendations were re-submitted to the Education Committee, and this time accepted. It then only remained for the County Council, in February 1963, to endorse the revised policy for L.E.A. fee-paying placements.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

After nearly three years of consultation and discussion, a decision was reached which affected only sixty instead of 206 children out of 30,000. Behind this apparently trivial outcome far more was at stake. What were the issues?

There were two basic, inter-related issues, namely the extent to which the public sector can or should make use of the private sector, and the extent to which parental wishes are to be respected. The first turns on the interpretation of shortage, and raises the question of the impact on the maintained schools of creaming-off to the benefit of the private schools.

The second raises difficult problems of legal interpretation and makes it necessary to examine whose parental preferences are expressed and how.

There was a clear division of opinion between officers and councillors in this case. The fact that vacancies existed in maintained grammar schools was not challenged by either side; what was in dispute was the consequences which should follow therefrom. Officers argued that in this situation under Section 6 of the 1953 Education Act cuts ought to be made in L.E.A. fee-paying school places, especially free ones at independent schools. Councillors held that continuance of, or even an increase in, such places was nevertheless justified, quoting Section 76 of the 1944 Education Act, which safeguards parental choice. Officers in reply pointed to the financial limitations which Section 76 places upon parental choice. However, this merely prevented councillors from pursuing the attempt to *increase* free places at independent schools.

'Shortage' under the 1953 Act and concern for public expenditure were not all that mattered to the officers. It was important to assess how use of the private sector affected the public sector. It had been made very clear during officer discussions that creaming by the fee-paying schools was reducing standards in maintained grammar schools and endangering extended courses in the modern schools. The logical consequence of accepting this might have been to sever the link between the two sectors at a time when there was no longer any need to depend on private school places. However, the majority of officers, whilst accepting cuts, did not ask for the elimination of fee-paying places. Only one argued explicitly against taking *any* places in the private sector. The remainder were content with a review of *the number of* places taken. They regarded these places as an integral part of the provision of selective secondary education. The arguments for creaming of the ablest children first by fee-paying and then by maintained grammar schools were never in question.

To return to the position of the councillors, it is often suggested that they are in the hands of their officers. This may be true for much of the time, but this case study shows that it need not be so. In fact councillors whittled away the cuts in fee-paying school places proposed by their officers. The principal reason must be sought in the influence of vocal or potentially vocal parents. Whilst there is no evidence of organized political pressure being brought to bear by parents – except for the representations on behalf of R.C. parents – councillors were aware of the keen parental interest in access to grammar schools in general, and to fee-paying schools in particular. They might have had in mind the fact that when parents were notified of the secondary school to which their child was to be transferred, a considerable number used to telephone or visit their education offices. Complaints concerned failure to obtain a place in an independent or direct grant school or to secure the maintained grammar school next on their list. Moreover, some councillors were themselves parents, or may have been ex-pupils of fee-paying schools.

In certain circumstances, councillors are able to withstand pressures of this kind, in particular if the issue is one of clear party policy. None of the evidence suggests that on the issue of L.E.A. placements in fee-paying schools either party group on the Middlesex County Council had a clear-cut policy. There was evidence of cross-party voting on at least one occasion. This probably made both party groups much more accessible to pressures exercised by interested groups inside and outside the Council.

On this occasion, the Conservative Chairman of the Education Committee, who initially had supported the proposals of his officers, had to take note of the influence R.C. councillors exercised in his own party. This may have prepared the ground for concessions made to R.C. independent schools, subsequent to the Chairman receiving an R.C. deputation.

On the Labour side, it was an R.C. councillor who, on the Education Committee, moved the reference back of the Sub-committee's report, using 'means test' rather than denominational arguments to gain support from other party colleagues. At the same time Conservative R.C. councillors supported him probably on denominational grounds. Once concessions had been made to the R.C. schools, the Chairman may well have considered it unfair that these schools alone should benefit. It was actually his suggestion that only the first stage of the proposed cuts be implemented, and from this the non-denominational independent and the direct grant schools were to benefit as well.

As far as the direct grant schools are concerned, the part played by the Ministry was decisive. When consulted by the C.E.O., it jumped to their defence, following which the C.E.O. proposed less severe cuts. The Ministry feared the effect of cuts in L.E.A. places on school fees. The burden of higher fees would fall not merely on L.E.A.s buying places, but also on fee-paying parents opting out of the maintained sector of education.

How can the attitude of the Ministry be explained? Undoubtedly the Ministry, like the councillors, had discontented parents in mind. For such discontent makes itself felt at the Ministry, in Parliament and on local councils. Furthermore, both the Ministry and the C.E.O. treated the direct grant schools as part of the state sector. Until very recently, the Secretary of State for Education and Science argued that the direct grant schools 'should negotiate direct with their local authorities' on secondary reorganization. There are, however, indications of a change in outlook. Some of the leading direct grant schools may now be referred to the Public Schools Commission,¹ which clearly would put them in the private sector.

It is now clear why the officers were rebuffed when they proposed drastic cuts in fee-paying places. They put themselves in conflict with Ministry, councillor and parental opinion. The L.E.A.'s dependence, therefore, could not be explained in terms of 'shortage' of maintained provision alone. It existed also because of parental pressures on policy makers.

¹*Observer*, 26 February 1967.

If it is accepted that parents exert an influence over policy, the further question arises – how representative are these parents? This case study indicates that parental choice is effectively exercised mainly in connexion with access to selective schools. Sir Edward Boyle said last year that people had to ‘search their consciences about how much choice there was for those who were not selected for grammar schools’.¹ It is now generally known that middle class children have a far better chance to go to grammar school than working class ones. The writer’s own evidence supports the conclusion that it is mainly middle class parental pressure which exerts a subtle influence over policy makers in the education service. In the case study examined some parents expected to opt out of the state sector of secondary education by sending their children to private schools – but at public expense – and this expectation was respected.

It may be concluded that in this case parental wishes were respected at the expense of the ratepayer on the one hand and of the standard of work in maintained schools on the other. The case study thus raises the general question of how much weight is to be given to parents’ wishes – even irrespective of whether they form a minority as in this case, or a more representative group of parents – when these wishes conflict with other legitimate claims.

This is a question of fundamental importance. The Act itself gives some guidance by placing certain limitations on parents’ wishes. These wishes shall be respected in so far as they are compatible with the ‘avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure’ and ‘the provision of efficient instruction and training’.² These stipulations have been on the statute book for over twenty years. Yet this article has shown that the problems arising in their application are not easy to solve. Either the Act is in need of revision, or a reinterpretation of the law is called for in order to ensure that parental choice takes its rightful place alongside such considerations as the right of all children to a good education, and the needs of the nation for a well-educated population.

¹Addressing the Northern Education Conference, as reported by *The Times*, 7 January 1966.

²1944 Education Act, Section 76.